THE LIVES OF THE TWELVE

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams ('a)

Written By
Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī

• PART ONE •

A LOOK AT THE LIVES OF IMAM ALI ('a), IMAM HASAN ('a), AND IMAM HUSAYN ('a)

Translated By
Sayyid Ali Musawi

The Lives of the Twelve is a pioneering work that details the lives of the Twelve Shia Imams. While most works on the Twelve Imams focuses on the basics of their lives, this text goes into the details of their social and political lives and how they affected change throughout their societies. Through extensive research, Shaykh Mahdi Pishvai has been able to craft together many details which were not widely known before. This is the first time a book of this caliber has been published in the English language. Today, we live in times where morality and a sense of right and wrong have all but disappeared. In light of this, we can turn to the teachings and wisdom of the Twelve in order to see how we can help bring back morality and that human sense of differentiating between right and wrong in our society. This work is composed of four distinct volumes, each of which goes into the lives of three of the Twelve Imams.

NOOR COLLECTIVE PUBLICATIONS

ISBN 9781727359022

90000

9 781727 359022

The Lives of the Twelve

(Part One)

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams

Written By: Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī

Translated By: Sayyid Ali Musawi

Copyright 2018 Sayyid Ali Musawi

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by reviewers, who may quote brief passages in a review.

Library of Congress Control Number 143563

Printed and bound in the United States of America

First Printing September 2018

Published by Noor Collective Publications
PO Box 500862
San Diego, California, USA 92150

Visit www.NoorCollective.org

Preface and Acknowledgments

-By Sayyid Ali Musawi

In the name of God, the All-Beneficent, the Ever Merciful

Many times, the work on the lives of the Twelve Imams ('a) tend to be strictly biographical in nature and they do not deal with the social or political aspects of their lives. This book primarily summarizes the biographical aspects of their lives and it delves into the details of how they worked to spread the true teachings of the religion of Islam throughout their societies. Indeed, we are indebted to these Twelve Guides; without their teachings and their guidance, we would have been plunged into the depths of darkness.

Although this book began as a project many long years ago, it has finally reached completion during this 4th night of the month of Muḥarram in the year 1440 (September 14, 2018). We thank God for his blessings which weigh heavy on us and we ask that he guides us in his path and that he allows us to be more perfect in serving him. Truly, nothing is possible except through God.

I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to my

parents, who have been so integral all of these years in teaching and guiding me. I would also like to thank everyone who has been a part of this journey thus far, particularly my teachers in the religious seminary of Qum, Iran. My years there proved invaluable to who I am today and I would not trade them for anything in this world. I would also like to thank the members of the Noor Collective in San Diego, California for creating the platform which inspired this publication. Finally, I would like to thank Issa K. for his help in the final editing of this manuscript, as well as Haider al-Shaher for his work on the cover page. May we all be worthy one day to call ourselves the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)...

Sayyid Ali Musawi,
September 14, 2018
San Diego, California

Contents

The Lives of the Twelve 1

(Part One) 1

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams 1

Written By: Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī 1
Translated By: Sayyid Ali Musawi 1

The First Imam 15

Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib 15

A Brief Introduction into the Life of 15

Imam ʿAlī 1

The Life of Imam ʿAlī 1
1-From His Birth until the Commencement of the Prophet's Mission 1

Under the Care of the Prophet (ṣ) 2
Imam 'Alī ('a) at the Cave of Ḥirā 3
2- From the Beginning of the Prophetic Mission until the Emigration of the Prophet 5

The First Individual to Accept the Religion 5
Evidence of Imam 'Alī's Precedence in Accepting Islam 7
The Supporter and Deputy of the Prophet 9
The Great Act of Self Sacrifice 12
3 – From the Emigration until the Passing of the Prophet.... 15
Imam 'Alī, the 'Brother of the Prophet' 15
In the Battlefields of War 16
A- In the Battle of Badr 17
B – Imam 'Alī's Courage at the Battle of Uḥud 19
C- During the Battle of Aḥzāb (The Confederates) 24
Dangerous Days 26
D - The Victor over the Fortresses of Khaybar 31
The Ambassador and Deputy of the Prophet 33
4 – From the Passing of the Prophet until the Caliphate of Imam ʿAlī 36

The Passing of the Holy Prophet and the Issue of Leadership 37
The Two Paths 37
Domestic and Foreign Dangers 39

The Activities of Imam 'Alī during the Time of the Three Caliphs 43
The Solving of the Political and Scientific Problems of the Caliphs 45
The War against the Romans 45
The Consultations of the Second Caliph with Imam 'Alī 46
From Imam 'Alī's Caliphate until his Martyrdom 49
The Manner in Which People Swore Allegiance to Imam 'Alī 49
The Lofty Position of Imam 'Alī 50
His Engagement in the Three Battles 54
The Battle against the Nākithīn 54
The Battle against the Qāsiṭīn 54
The Battle against the Māriqīn 55

The Second Imam 57

Imam Ḥasan 57

A Brief Introduction into the Life of Imam Ḥasan 58
The Answerer of the Deprived 58
An Instructive Lesson 59
The Family of Knowledge and Virtue 59
Unparalleled Generosity 60
His Indirect Assistance 61
Examining the Causes and Reasons behind the Peace Treaty of Imam Ḥasan 62
1- Imam Ḥasan's Role in the Wars before his Caliphate 62
At the Battle of the Camel 63
In the Battle of Ṣiffīn 63
2- Imam Ḥasan's Conflict with Mū'āwīya 64
3- The Islamic Code of Law in Regards to Peace Treaties 65
From the Perspective of Foreign Politics 66
From the Perspective of Domestic Politics 68
Weariness of War 68
A Disunited Society 71
A Discordant Army 71
A Self Evident Proof 72
Imam Ḥasan ('a) and the Mobilization of Forces 74
The People Who Broke Their Pledge 75
Treacherous Commanders 75
The Plots of Traitors 76
The Khawārij 77
Imam Ḥasan's Explanation behind the Acceptance of the Peace Treaty 78
The Peace Treaty and the Goals of Imam Ḥasan 80
The Text of the Treaty 80
The Goals of Imam Ḥasan in the Peace Treaty with Mū'āwīya 82
A Gathering in Kūfah 83
The Crimes of Mū'āwīya 84

The Awakening and Rising Awareness of the People *85*
Mū'āwīya's Policy of Fear and Hunger *86*
The Peak of Pressure in Kūfah and Baṣrah *87*
The Peace Treaty was the Foundation of the Revolution of 'Āshūrā *88*
Overtures of Revolution *89*
Reaction in Medina *90*
Why did Imam Ḥasan choose peace, while Imam Ḥusayn chose Rebellion? 91
The Deception of Mū'āwīya *91*
An Unfavorable Atmosphere *93*
Yazīd: The Detested Leader *94*
The Movement Gains in Number *95*
A Divinely Inspired Movement *97*
The Difference in Supporters *97*
Two Approaches for One Message *98*
The Third Imam 100
Imam Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī 100
A Brief Introduction Into the Life of Imam Ḥusayn 101
The Many Facets of the Life of Imam Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī *101*
The Struggle of Imam Ḥusayn Against Mū'āwīya 101
In the Battles against the Nākithīn and Qāsiṭīn *102*
The Political and Social Climate During the Life of Imam Ḥusayn *103*
The Obstacles of Revolt during the Time of Mū'āwīya 105
1- The Peace Treaty of Imam Ḥasan with Mū'āwīya *105*
2- Mū'āwīya's Religious Pretenses *106*
The Struggle of Imam Ḥusayn against Mū'āwīya *108*
1- Imam Ḥusayn's Letters and Speeches of Protest *108*
His Opposition with the Nomination of Yazīd as the Caliph *108*
Mū'āwīya's Worry of a Rebellion by Imam Ḥusayn *110*
Imam Ḥusayn's Response to Mū'āwīya *110*
2- Imam Ḥusayn's Sermon at the Annual Gathering of the Ḥajj *113*
3- Seizing the Government's Wealth *116*
The Nature and the Factors Related to the Revolt of 'Āshūrā *117*
The Factors Which Gave Rise to the Movement of Imam Ḥusayn 118
1- Opposition in Pledging Allegiance to Yazīd *118*
2- The Kufan's Invitation of Imam Ḥusayn *120*
3- The Factor of 'Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil' *121*
The Weight of Each of These Three Factors 122
1- Imam Ḥusayn's Will *123*
2- Unacceptable Silence *124*
3- The Effacement of Prophetic Customs and the Propagation of Religious Innovations *125*
4- The Truth is No Longer Being Acted Upon *125*
An Uprising Based on Awareness *126*

The Spread of Umayyid Influence in the Centers of Power.. 127
Mū'āwīya's Actions Against Islam..... 129
Yazīd: The Detested Ruler..... 131
Yazīd's Inclination towards Christianity..... 134
The Messengers of Karbalā..... 135
The Monarchical Rule of Mū'āwīya in Syria..... 136
Poisonous Propaganda..... 138
A Gift from the Journey of the Captives..... 140
1- The Immunity of the Household of the Imam during the Tragedy of 'Ḥurrah'..... 141
2- The Order of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān to Ḥajjāj..... 143
Destroying the Umayyid's Ideological Foundations..... 143
Predestination as a Tool of Control..... 144
Benefiting from the Media..... 146
Lady Zaynab at the Palace of Ibn Zīyād..... 146
Lady Zaynab's Sermon at Kūfah..... 149
Lady Zaynab in the Palace of Yazīd..... 152
The Defiance of Lady Zaynab..... 153
The Fourth Imam and the Propaganda War..... 156
The Exchange of Words between Imam Sajjād and the Son of Zīyād..... 158
The Sermon of Imam Sajjād in Syria..... 159
The Message and the Consequences of Karbalā..... 164
1- The Disgrace of the Umayyid Government..... 164
2- The Revival of the Prophetic Tradition of Martyrdom..... 168
3- The Rise of the Muslim Nation..... 171
A- The Revolt of the Tawwābīn..... 171
The Goals of the Tawwābīn..... 173
The Tawwābīn's Forces..... 174
The Military Actions of the Tawwābīn..... 174
B- The Revolt of Mukhtār..... 175
The Reason behind Abdullah ibn Zubayr's Unrealized Goals 176
4- The Overthrow of the Umayyids..... 178

Part One: A Look at the Lives of Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, and Imam Husayn

Noor Collective Publications

In Collaboration with '313 Productions'

The First Imam

Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib

A Brief Introduction into the Life of Imam ʿAlī

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was born on the 13th of Rajab, 30 years after the 'Year of the Elephant'. He has the distinction of having been born inside of the Kaaba; this is a distinction held by no one other than him. His mother was Fāṭimah bint Asad and his father was Abū Ṭālib. During the 21st of the holy month of Ramaḍān in the 40th year of the Hijrah, he reached the rank of martyrdom in the city of Kūfah. His grave is located in the city of Najaf.

The Life of Imam ʿAlī

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was born ten years before the start of the divine mission[1] of the Prophet (ṣ). Throughout the years, he was constantly by the Prophet's side, and he lived for an additional thirty years after his passing. His 63 years of life can be divided into five major parts:

1. From his birth until the start of the Prophet's (ṣ) mission (Biʿthah)
2. From the beginning of the prophetic mission until the emigration (Hijrah) of the Prophet (ṣ) to Medina
3. From the emigration to Medina until the passing of the Prophet (ṣ)
4. From the passing of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) until Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) succession of the caliphate
5. And finally, the period of his caliphate

1-From His Birth until the Commencement of the Prophet's Mission

If the life of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was divided into five major sections, the first of these would be that which occurred before the 'Biʿthah' of the Prophet (ṣ). This section is

[1] Biʿthah

comprised of just ten years of Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) life and therefore, from the time of his birth, no more than thirty years had passed since the birth of the Prophet (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) reached his 'Biʿthah' at the age of 40 and at this time, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was approximately 10 years of age.

Under the Care of the Prophet (ṣ)

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), at the sensitive young age when character and spirituality is more easily formed, was constantly in the house of the Prophet (ṣ) and under the influence of his training and education. Islamic historians have written:

"One year, a great famine overtook Mecca. At that time, Abū Ṭālib, the uncle of the Prophet (ṣ), had a very large family and this caused him to have very heavy expenses. The Prophet (ṣ) approached another of his uncles, who was named ʿAbbās (one of the very wealthy individuals of the tribe of Hāshim) and suggested that each of them take one of Abū Ṭālib's children to their home and care for them as their own, in order that his financial burden be lessened. ʿAbbās agreed to this and they both went to Abū Ṭālib and presented their idea to him. Abū Ṭālib also agreed to their proposal and they each took one of his sons under their care. ʿAbbās took Jaʿfar and the Prophet (ṣ) took ʿAlī (ʿa). ʿAlī (ʿa) was at the Prophet's (ṣ) house until the time when he was commissioned with prophethood.[2] When this took place, ʿAlī (ʿa) confirmed his Prophethood (ṣ) and followed him in the new faith. The Prophet (ṣ), after selecting ʿAlī (ʿa) to bring to his home, declared: "I selected the same one whom God had selected for me."[3]

During the time when ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had passed away,

---

[2] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 58.
- Ibn Hishām, ʿAbd al-Malik, Al-Sīrā al-Nūbūwīyah, researched by Muṣṭafā al-Saqā', Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalbī, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī (Published by Maktabah al-Ṣadr Tehran), 1355 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 262.

[3] Abū al-Faraj Iṣfihānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibīn, Najaf Ashraf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaīdārīa, (Bī Tā), p. 15.

the Prophet (ṣ) had ended up living at the house of his uncle Abū Ṭālib and he had been raised under his guardianship and loving care. By taking one of Abū Ṭālib's children under his wing, he wished to help compensate for the efforts and hardship that Abū Ṭālib and his wife Fāṭimah bint Asad had undergone in raising him.

Many years later, during his time as caliph, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) mentioned his education and training under the Prophet (ṣ) in his sermon of 'Qāṣiʿah'. He said: "You (companions of the Prophet (ṣ)) are aware of my closeness with the Prophet of God (ṣ) and the special position which I had with him. You know that when I was a young child, he would embrace me in his arms, and would hold me tightly to his chest, and would lay me to sleep on his own bed in such a way that I would feel him close next to me and I would smell his sweet perfume, and he would feed me with his own hands. In the same way that a child follows his mother, I would follow him wherever he went and each day, he would enlighten me with one of his ethical and moral virtues. After teaching me, he would command me to act upon that which I had learned."[4]

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) at the Cave of Ḥirā

Before the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) was given the mandate of prophethood, he would go to the Cave of Ḥirā for one month out of each year for worship.[5] When the month would reach its end, and it was time for him to return to his home, he would first go to Masjid al-Ḥarām and circumambulate around it. This was done either seven times or whichever number God had commanded at that time. When this was complete, he would then return to his home.[6]

---

[4] Nahj al-Balāghah, Ṣubḥī Ṣālih, Sermon 192.

[5] Ḥirā is a mountain on the north side of Mecca and the Cave of Ḥirā is located at its summit.

[6] Ibn Hishām, al-Sīrāh al-Nabawīya, Researched by Muṣṭafā al-Saqā', Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and ʿAbd al-Ḥafiẓ Shalbī, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī (Published by

Historical context shows us that in addition to the intense attention that the Prophet (ṣ) would pay to Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), he would also take him on his month long seclusions to the Cave of Ḥirā. When the Angel of Revelation revealed himself for the first time at the Cave of Ḥirā to the Prophet (ṣ), and conferred upon him the rank of Prophethood, ʿAlī (ʿa) was by his side.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), in his Sermon of Qaṣiʿah, has said about this incident that: "The Prophet (ṣ) would go every year to the Mountain of Ḥirā for worship, and except for me, no one would see him... At the time when he was first subject to revelation, I heard the sound of Satan wailing, and I asked the Prophet (ṣ): 'Whose wailing is this?' He replied: 'This is the sound of the wailing of Satan; he is wailing because he has become hopeless of being obeyed on this earth. That which I hear, you also hear, and that which I see, you also see, except for the fact that you are not a prophet but you are my successor and deputy and upon the path of righteousness"[7]

While these words can be taken to refer to the worship of the Prophet (ṣ) at the Cave of Ḥirā after the mandate of his prophethood, this would be incorrect, as the previous historical context shows that the Prophet (ṣ) would worship at the Cave of Ḥirā before he was commissioned. This shows that these words are referring precisely to the era before the start of his prophetic mission. Whatever the case may be, the spiritual purity of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and his thorough education and training by the Prophet (ṣ) caused him to develop, at a very young age, a sensitive heart and an ability to perceive the world around him with superb clarity. With these faculties he was able to see and hear things which were impossible for normal people to distinguish.

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd Muʿtazalī, in his Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, has written: "In the authentic books it has been narrated that when the Angel Gabriel revealed himself to

---

Maktabah al-Ṣadr Tehran, 1355 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 252.

[7] Nahj al-Balāghah, Ṣubḥī Ṣālih, Sermon 192.

the Prophet (ṣ) for the first time and commissioned him with prophethood, ʿAlī (ʿa) was next to him by his side."[8]

It is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) that he said: "'Alī (ʿa), before the Prophet (ṣ) was mandated with prophethood, would see the light of prophecy and hear the sounds of angels along with the Prophet (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) would tell him: 'If I was not the "Seal of Prophets," you would have had the worthiness and capacity of prophethood. Yet you are my deputy and successor, the master of the successors, and the leader of the pious.'"[9]

2- From the Beginning of the Prophetic Mission until the Emigration of the Prophet

The second part of Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) life is comprised of the time from the beginning of the prophetic mission until the emigration of the Prophet (ṣ) to Medina; this period consists of approximately 13 years. This part of the life of the Imam (ʿa) encompasses his prominent services and monumental struggles in the path of Islam. The things which he achieved are unique only to him; no one else in the history of Islam comes close to having the distinctions which he attained. His life seems to be a history book filled with a number of 'Firsts'.

The First Individual to Accept the Religion

The first honor which Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) attained in this period, was in being the first person to accept the religion of Islam. In reality, this acceptance was the outward manifestation of his inner submission to God which he already possessed. This is because ʿAlī (ʿa) had always been a monotheist, even from a very young age. He had never been soiled with the ignorance of idol worship[10], which was

---

[8] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 208.

[9] Madrak Pīshīn, p. 210.

[10] Akhṭab Khawārizm, Al-Manāqib, Najaf, al-Maṭba'atah al-Ḥaīdārīyah, 1385 Hijrī

common amongst the people of that time. Therefore, his acceptance of Islam did not take on the meaning of forsaking idol worship. The same could not be said for the rest of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ).

Being the first of those who accepted Islam is a status which the Holy Quran has emphasized and proclaimed. It has been stated that those who had an early inclination towards becoming Muslims had a high value in front of God. The Holy Quran says: "And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones: they are the ones brought near [to Allah]"[11]

The Holy Quran places high importance on the matter of those who 'overtake others in terms of their inclination to the religion of Islam'. For example, those who became Muslims before the conquest of Mecca, and placed their lives and wealth in the service of God, are known to be superior in comparison to those who became Muslims after the conquest of Mecca. Likewise, those who became Muslim from the beginning of Islam, even before the emigration took place, have a more special position in the eyes of God.

The Holy Quran mentions: "Not equal [to others] are those of you who spent and fought before the victory. They are greater in rank than those who have spent and fought afterwards. Yet Allah has promised the best reward to each and Allah is well aware of what you do. ... "[12]

The reason behind the superiority of the Muslims who had submitted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca (which took place in the 8th year Hijrī), lies in the fact that these people came to the faith at a time when Islam had not yet reached its peak of power. In fact, the idol worshippers still controlled the city of Mecca and it was a formidable power base for them. More importantly, the city was seen as being unconquerable. Due to this power balance, these early Muslims were under threat from every side and their lives and wealth were greatly

---

Qamarī, p. 18.

[11] Surah Wāqi'ah, Verses 10 and 11.

[12] Surah Ḥadid, Verse 10.

in danger.

After the Prophet (ṣ) migrated to the city of Medina, and Islam was accepted by the tribes of Aws, Khazraj, as well as others, the situation of the Muslims improved slightly and they were victorious in a number of military conflicts. Even with these advancements, their lives were still in danger and the prospect of total destruction was still a very real threat.

Naturally, if accepting Islam in such conditions, and dedicating one's life and wealth to the cause was considered as such a monumental sacrifice, then dedicating oneself to Islam at its earliest stage, when there was no powerbase except for that of the Quraysh and the idol worshippers, naturally held one of the highest values. Being the first Muslim also had a very high value and worth in the eyes of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) as well. Therefore, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), by being the first Muslim, held an honor that was unparalleled and recognized by the Holy Quran, as well as the society in which he lived.

Evidence of Imam ʿAlī's Precedence in Accepting Islam

The evidence which shows that Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was the first to accept Islam are so numerous in quantity and quality in the Islamic texts, that it would not be possible to mention them all in this book. It will suffice to mention a few of them below:

A. The Prophet (ṣ) mentioned the precedence of Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) acceptance of Islam. Amongst a gathering of his companions, he said: "The first person who will meet me next to the 'Spring of Kawthar' on the Day of Judgment will be the one who was foremost amongst you in accepting Islam: ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib."[13]

---

[13] Ibn 'Abd al-Bir, Al-Isti'āb Fī al-Ma'rifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Beirut Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 28.,
-Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by : Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 119.

B. Scholars and experts of tradition narrate that: "The Prophet (ṣ) was commissioned to prophethood on a Tuesday and ʿAlī (ʿa) prayed with him on Wednesday (of the very next day)."[14]

C. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), in his sermon of Qāṣiʿah, is quoted as saying: "On that day, Islam had not entered into any house but the house of the Prophet (ṣ) and Khadījah (ʿa), and I was the third person amongst them. I could see the light of revelation and the prophetic message, and I could sense the essence of prophethood."[15]

D. In another place, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) remembers his precedence in becoming a Muslim by saying: "Oh God, I am the first individual who came towards you, heard your message, and answered the invitation of the Prophet (ṣ); before me, no one but your Prophet (ṣ) performed the prayer."[16]

E. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) says: "I am the servant of God and the 'Brother of the Prophet (ṣ)'....this utterance will not be said after me by anyone, except for a liar. I prayed alongside the Prophet (ṣ) for seven years before anyone else."[17]

F. ʿUfayf ibn Qays Kindī has said that: "During the time of the 'Jāhilīyah',[18] I was a merchant in the bazaar and I dealt in perfumes. During one of my travels as a merchant, I entered Mecca and became a guest of ʿAbbās, who was one of the wealthy merchants of the city. During one of the days of my stay, I was sitting in Masjid al-Ḥarām alongside with ʿAbbās at a time when the sun had reached its peak. It was then that I saw a

---

[14] Ibn 'Abd al-Bir, Al-Istiʿāb Fī al-Maʿrifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 32.

- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 57.

[15] Nahj al-Balāghah, Ṣubḥī Ṣālih, Sermon 192 .

[16] Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 131.

[17] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bī Tā) vol. 2, p. 312.

-Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 57.

[18] Literally the 'Age of Ignorance' in reference to the time before Islam.

youth come into the mosque. The face of this youth reminded me of the moon when it is at its peak of luminosity and beauty. This youth looked at the sky and then commenced to face the Kaaba and pray. Not much time had passed when I saw an adolescent, who had a pleasant visage, join him at his right side in prayer. Then a woman, who had covered herself, came and positioned herself behind them. All three of them busied themselves in prayer by reciting, genuflecting, and prostrating.

I became amazed at this sight (from seeing these three following a different religion at the very center of idol worship). I turned to ʿAbbās and said: 'This is an amazing occurrence.' ʿAbbās repeated my words in agreement and added: 'Do you know who these three are?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'The first person who entered and who is standing in front of the others is my nephew Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah; the second individual is my other nephew ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and the third individual is the wife of Muḥammad. Muḥammad claims that his religion has been revealed from God, and at this moment, on this very earth, no one follows this religion but these three.'"[19] This narration clearly shows that at the beginning of the Prophet's (ṣ) invitation to Islam, with the exception of his wife Khadījah (ʿa), no one had accepted him except Imam ʿAlī (ʿa).

The Supporter and Deputy of the Prophet

For a period of three years, the Prophet (ṣ) refrained from

---

[19] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, in the very same book, has narrated this event. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary of the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 226.

- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bī Tā) vol. 2, p. 212. (With slight differences in the wording) from ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿūd, who on his journey to Mecca had been a witness to this scene.

giving a general invitation to his people. He only initiated personal contact with individuals whom he felt had the foundations for accepting Islam.

After three years of private invitations, the Angel of Revelation came down and conveyed God's command that the Prophet (ṣ) should begin inviting the general public to Islam. This general invitation was to be initiated with his family and close relations. God's command was as follows: "Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk, and lower your wing to the faithful who follow you. But if they disobey you, say, 'I am absolved of what you do.'"[20]

The reason why the close relations of the Prophet (ṣ) were selected as the first individuals to be invited was that until the closest people to a person claiming prophethood have faith in him and follow him, then his act of inviting strangers will not be successful. This is due to the fact that close relatives are always aware of the secrets of their family members, as well as their good and bad characteristics. They are aware of these to a much higher degree than people who are not related. Therefore, their having faith in such an individual can be counted as one of the signs of their truthfulness. On the other hand, if the closest people to an individual turn away from him, then this is a sign of his lack of sincerity and truthfulness in what he claims. Therefore, judging from this perspective, the Prophet (ṣ) commanded that Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) invite forty five of the important and notable individuals of Banī Hāshim for a lunch banquet, and to prepare a meal for them of meat and milk.

All the guests gathered in the presence of the Prophet (ṣ) at the appointed time. Soon, the food was served and the guests ate their meal. Unfortunately, when the Prophet (ṣ) wished to speak, Abū Lahab destroyed the proper mood and spirit of the gathering with his frivolous talk. The gathering ended without the Prophet (ṣ) being able to deliver his message, and the

[20] Surah Shu'arā, Verses 214-216.

guests, after having eaten their food and drink, left his house. The Prophet (ṣ) decided to invite them to his house the following day for yet another meal. He invited them all once again with the exception of Abū Lahab. ʿAlī (ʿa), based on the orders of the Prophet (ṣ), prepared another meal of meat and milk, and invited the prominent members of the tribe of Banī Hāshim to the house of the Prophet (ṣ) for this second gathering. All the guests gathered at the appointed time, and after the serving of the food, the Prophet (ṣ) began to speak.

He said: "No person has brought for his people anything better than what I have brought for you. I have brought you the good of both this world and the next. My God has commanded me to invite you towards his 'Tawhīd'[21] and my mission of Prophethood. Which person amongst you will aid me in this path and become my brother, administrator, and representative between all of you?"

He then paused to see which one of them would give him a positive reply. An absolute silence dominated over the gathering mingled with surprise. The people in the room were stunned to silence and become engrossed in thought.

Suddenly ʿAlī (ʿa), who at that time was no older than fifteen years in age, broke the silence and stood up facing the Prophet (ṣ). He said: "Oh Prophet of God (ṣ), I will help you on this path." He then stretched his hand towards the Prophet (ṣ) so that he could make his covenant official. At this time, the Prophet (ṣ) commanded ʿAlī (ʿa) to sit down. Again, the Prophet (ṣ) repeated his words. Again, ʿAlī (ʿa) stood up and announced his readiness. Again, he was asked to sit down.

Then the Prophet (ṣ) repeated his words for the last and final time, and ʿAlī (ʿa) responded to them in the affirmative once again. No one at the gathering but ʿAlī (ʿa) had answered the call of the Prophet (ṣ) to aid him in his divine mission. At this time, the Prophet (ṣ) took his own hand and struck it against Alī's hand in confirmation of the oath. Then he said

[21] The oneness and unity of God.

a line in that gathering of the Banī Hāshim that still resounds strongly throughout the pages of history. He (ṣ) said: "Behold, oh my relatives and near ones, ʿAlī (ʿa) is my brother, administrator, and caliph amongst all of you."[22]

Therefore, the first deputy of Islam, by means of the last divine Prophet (ṣ), had been selected at the very beginning of the prophetic mission, and this was at a time when only a small group considered themselves as Muslims.

Interestingly enough, on the very same day that the Prophet (ṣ) announced his own prophethood to his relatives and close ones, he also announced the imamate of ʿAlī (ʿa). The high rank and position of the imamate in Islam can clearly be distinguished and judged based on this timing and sequence of events. Even from the earliest days of Islam, imamate was a complementary program alongside prophethood and these two positions were not considered separate from one another.

The Great Act of Self Sacrifice

On the thirteenth year after the beginning of the prophetic mission, right after the second pledge of ʿAqabah, a new development took place in the world of Islam. The people of Yathrib invited the Prophet (ṣ) to their city and promised him assistance and safety. The night after this was finalized, the Muslims of Mecca began to migrate towards Yathrib one by one, leaving their city. The heads of Quraysh soon became aware of this and understood that a new power base had been realized for the spread of Islam in the city of Yathrib. They felt that this was a grave new danger for them. The danger was due to the fact that the Quraysh had tortured and harassed the Muslims a great deal. If the Prophet (ṣ)

---

[22] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bī Tā) vol. 2, p. 217.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1388 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 63.
- Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 211.

wished to take revenge on them, he would be able to do so from this new city either through direct warfare or, at the very least, through threatening the Quraysh's trade routes which passed by the city of Yathrib.

For facing such a threat, the Quraysh gathered at a council on the last day of the month of Ṣafar (14 Hijrī) and struggled to find a solution for their newfound problem. During this council, some gave the suggestion that the Prophet (ṣ) be exiled or jailed, but this idea was rejected. Then they reached the consensus that he should be killed, but the killing of the Prophet (ṣ) was problematic because the Banī Hāshim would not sit quietly by, and they would react with a campaign of revenge for his murder. After thinking this issue over, they decided that they would select a young man from every tribe, and then all together this group would attack the Prophet (ṣ) and kill him while he slept in his bed. With this plan of action, the killer would not be a single individual, and the Banī Hāshim would not be able to wage war on all of the tribes in the area, thereby becoming content with simply receiving the blood money for the killing. The Quraysh selected the first night of the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal for their attack.

God, in the Holy Quran, later mentioned these three plots of the Quraysh in the Quran. He said: "When the faithless plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill or expel you. They plotted and Allah devised, and Allah is the best of devisers."[23]

Following this decision by the Quraysh, the Angel of Revelation made the Prophet (ṣ) aware of the polytheist's plot, and conveyed the divine command that the Prophet (ṣ) was to leave Mecca and go towards Yathrib.

In order to subvert the plot of the polytheists and leave the city, the Prophet (ṣ) had to allow them to think that he was still in his home. For this method to be successful, it was necessary for a devoted and selfless individual to sleep in the

[23] Surah Anfāl, Verse 30.

bed of the Prophet (ṣ) that night. If someone slept in the bed, then the group which had surrounded the home would think that the house was still occupied. This individual was none other than Imam ʿAlī (ʿa).

The Prophet (ṣ) made Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) aware of the plan of the leaders of the Quraysh and asked if the Imam (ʿa) was willing to take this risk. The Imam (ʿa) accepted without any hesitation. When the Prophet saw this, he said to the Imam (ʿa): "Sleep in my bed tonight and pull my green cloth over yourself, so that they may think that I am in the bed."

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) acted upon the Prophet's (ṣ) words, and the assassins surrounded the house as darkness fell. When the night passed and it became morning, they unsheathed their swords and rushed into the house. When they entered, they found none other than Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) rising from the bed.

The assassins had thought that their plan was certain to be successful; when they saw Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) in the bed, they were completely shocked and didn't know what to do. They turned to him and said: "Where is Muḥammad? Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) said: Did you entrust him to me to be asking for him now! You did something where he had to leave this house."

At this, they rushed at ʿAlī (ʿa) and according to Ṭabarī, they beat him and dragged him towards 'Masjid al-Ḥarām'. There, they questioned him at length, and then ended up freeing him after realizing the hopelessness of their situation. After this, the group went towards Medina in pursuit of the Prophet (ṣ). At this very time, the Prophet (ṣ) had concealed himself at the cave of 'Thawr'.[24] The Holy Quran mentions this great act of devotion and self sacrifice of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) in a verse which mentions him as those who are willing to sacrifice their lives in the way of God: "And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah

---

[24] Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik, al-Sīrāh Nabawīya, Researched by: Muṣṭafā al- Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī (Published by Maktabah al-Ṣadr Tehran) 1355 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 124-128.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 102.
- Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir (Bī Tā), vol. 1, p. 228.

is most kind to [His] servants."[25]

The commentators have said: "This verse was sent down for the great act of self sacrifice of 'Alī ('a) on the 'Night of Mabīt'.[26] Imam 'Alī ('a) himself mentioned this virtue as a testament against the six person council which was formed on the command of 'Umar. He mentioned: "I swear all of you by God, was there anyone but me on that night full of danger when the Prophet (ṣ) had left for the Cave of Thawr? (Was there anyone but me) who slept in the Prophet's (ṣ) bed, and became a shield against calamity? All of them responded together: 'It was no one but you.'"[27]

3 – From the Emigration until the Passing of the Prophet

Imam 'Alī, the 'Brother of the Prophet'

Islamic brotherhood and the joining together of people is a foundational element of Islam. The Prophet (ṣ) would strive to join people together in various ways and to then strengthen those bonds once they had been created. A famous example of this occurred when the Prophet (ṣ) first entered Medina and decided to create 'bonds of brotherhood' between the 'Muhājirs'[28] and the 'Anṣār'[29]. One day when the Muslims had

---

[25] Surah Baqarah, Verse 207.

[26] - Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 262.

- Muḍaffar, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Dalā'īl al-Ṣidq, Second Print, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 80.

The late Muḍaffar narrates from prominent scholars and commentators of the Ahl al-Sunnah such as Tha'labī, Qandūzī, and Ḥākim where they all said: "This verse was revealed about 'Alī (a)."

[27] Shaykh Ṣadūq, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawīya, al-Khiṣāl, Edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, Manshūrāt Jāmi'ah' al-Mudarisīn Fī Hawzah al-'Ilmīyah Biqum, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 560.

- Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, Maṭba'at al-Murtaḍawīya, 1350 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 75.

[28] The Emigrants: This was the group which emigrated with the Prophet (s) from Mecca to Medina.

[29] The Helpers: These were the people of Medina who accepted Islam and invited the Prophet (s) to emigrate there.

gathered, the Prophet (ṣ) stood up and said: "In the way of God, become brothers two at a time." Then he proceeded to join the Muslims together in pairs, so that they took each other's hands as brothers, and unity and harmony was strengthened between them.

During this process, a type of compatibility was followed and individuals who were similar in terms of Islamic virtue, character, and faith were paired together. This aspect is very clear when the individuals paired are examined in terms of their characteristics and virtues.

After all the people in the gathering had been joined as brothers, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), who had been left without having been paired, came to the Prophet (ṣ) with tears in his eyes and said: "You did not create the bonds of brotherhood between me and another." The Prophet (ṣ) replied, "You are my brother in both this world and the next."[30] Then he proceeded to recite the oath of brotherhood between them. This event clearly shows the level of virtue and greatness which Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) possessed and it shows how close he was to the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

In the Battlefields of War

The life of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), from the time of the emigration until his martyrdom, is one full of activity and great feats. What is particularly striking is his level of self sacrifice and selflessness during his participation in the early wars of the Muslims. After the Prophet's emigration to Medina, there were 27 wars which he personally led[31]. These wars were fought against polytheists, Jews, and various rebel groups during his lifetime. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) participated in twenty-six of these and the only one that he did not participate in was the war of

---

[30] - Al-Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, Al-Mustadrak ʿAlā al-Ṣaḥiḥain, Formatted by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Marʿashī, First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1406 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 14.
- Ibn ʿAbd al-Bir, Al-Istiʿāb Fī al-Maʿrifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 35.

[31] In Arabic, the campaigns which the Prophet (s) himself led are termed 'غزو'. There were a number of other wars and battles which were not led by him personally.

'Tabūk'. During this war, the Prophet (ṣ) made him the governor of Medina due to the fear of sedition from the hypocrites who had stayed behind from the expedition.

To detail all of Imam 'Alī's ('a) wartime exploits would be out of the scope of this text, so we shall suffice with detailing his role during the four main battles which occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet (ṣ).

A- In the Battle of Badr

The Battle of Badr, which took place during the second year Hijrī, was the first full-fledged war between the newly formed Muslim community against the polytheists. Most importantly, it was the first military test between the two sides, and its outcome would prove highly crucial in deciding what was to come later.

During the second year, the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) became aware that a merchant caravan belonging to the Quraysh under the leadership of Abū Sufyān (a diehard enemy of Islam), would be passing by Medina. This caravan had departed from Damascus and was on its way to returning to Mecca; its return route passed close to Medina. The Prophet (ṣ), alongside with three hundred and thirteen members of the Muhājirs and Anṣār mobilized, and went towards an area called Badr that was along the route of the caravan; they went with the intention of seizing the caravan and what it was carrying. The polytheist's had stolen much of the property of the Muslims in times past, and this caravan contained some of these items.

The intention of the Prophet (ṣ) with such a tactic was to make the Quraysh aware that their route of trade was now under the control of the Muslims. If they were to continue blocking the freedom of the Muslims and the spread of Islam, then their economic artery could and would be severed. Abū Sufyān became aware of the move to intercept his caravan and so he chose another route that went alongside the Red Sea. Through these actions, he managed to move his caravan out

of danger. Simultaneously, he asked for help from the leaders of the Quraysh in Mecca.

In response to his request for help, approximately 950 to 1000 military men from the Quraysh came and began to march towards Medina. On the seventeenth day of the holy month of Ramaḍān, this group came head to head with the Muslims. The polytheists at this point possessed an army that was three times as large as that of the Muslims.

During the beginning of the battle, three individuals who were known for their mettle and courage, came to the middle of the battlefield and challenged their adversaries to fight them. These three were ʿUtbah (the father of Hind, who was the wife of Abū Sufyān), Shaybah (his older brother), and Walīd (ʿUtbah's son). Three of the people from the Anṣār, who were also known for their courage, came forward to meet this challenge. However, the fighters from the Quraysh did not accept them as their equals and yelled: "Oh Muḥammad (ṣ), bring us people who are from our relatives and who are our equals in standing to fight us".

At this challenge, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) ordered three other individuals to go forward for battle. They were ʿŪbaydah ibn Ḥārith ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, and Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). These three brave warriors went towards the battlefield and introduced themselves; the three polytheists accepted them and said: "These are our equals in standing." Ḥamzah went towards Shaybah, ʿŪbaydah with ʾUtbah, and Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), who was the youngest, went towards Walīd. Soon the fierce one on one battle began. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and Ḥamzah both killed their opponents quickly, but ʿŪbaydah and ʿUtbah were still battling, and neither was able to get the upper hand. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and Ḥamzah quickly went to the help of ʿŪbaydah and killed ʿUtbah.[32]

---

[32] Ibn Ḥishām, al-Sīrāh al-Nabawīya, Researched by: Muṣṭafā al-Saqā', Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī (Published by Maktabah al-Ṣadr Tehran) 1355 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 277.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 125.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), in one of his later letters to Mūʿāwīya, referred to this incident and said: "The sword which was used to kill your grandfather (ʿUtbah), your uncle (Walīd), and your brother (Ḥanẓalah), all in the course of a single battle, is still in my possession."[33]

After the victory of the three Muslim warriors over their opponents, the polytheists were hit hard psychologically by the defeat. Soon the general battle began, but it ended in defeat for the polytheists and they were soundly beaten. Moreover, 70 individuals from their army were taken prisoner.

In this battle, over half of those killed were killed by the sword of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). The late Shaykh Mufīd has listed 36 of the polytheists killed in the battle of Badr and has stated: "Shia and Sunni narrators have both independently written that this is the number which ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa) killed personally. There are others as to which there is a difference of opinion as to whom they were killed by. In addition, there may have been others who were jointly killed by Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and other individuals who were not counted in the number above."[34]

B – Imam ʿAlī's Courage at the Battle of Uḥud

After their defeat in the Battle of Badr, the Quraysh sustained a hard psychological blow. In order to get revenge for their war dead and to make up for their defeat, they decided to attack Medina with an even larger and better armed force than in the previous battle.

The Prophet (ṣ) had a group of sympathizers within the Quraysh who forewarned him of this plan which the leaders of the Quraysh had hatched. He then quickly formed a military commission in order to decide the best course of action. At this gathering, a group of people suggested that it would be better if the Muslims left the city of Medina and

---

[33] Nahj al-Balāghah, Ṣubḥī Ṣālih, Letter 64: Amīr al-Mu'minīn in his twenty-eigth letter recalls this event.

[34] Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 39.

fought with the polytheists on the city's outskirts.

This was accepted by the commission as being the best course of action and so the Prophet (ṣ) left the city with a force of one thousand men, moving towards the mountain of Uḥud, which was situated on the northern side of the city. On the way there, 300 soldiers from the supporters of ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUbayy, who was a known hypocrite, separated themselves from the army under his instigation and returned to Medina. The number of the Muslims had now decreased to seven hundred people. On the morning of the seventh of the month of Shawwāl, in the third year Hijrī, the two forces met and arrayed themselves into combat positions.

Before the hostilities began, the Prophet (ṣ) surveyed the battlefield from a military perspective and he saw that there was a place which could become a point of attack for the Quraysh and allow them to flank the Muslims from behind. The Prophet (ṣ) selected an officer by the name of ʿAbdullah ibn Jubayr to lead a group of fifty archers and he ordered them to position themselves on a hilltop and protect that position from the encroachment of the enemy. This group was ordered to not leave their positions under any circumstance and to stand their ground whether the Muslims had won or lost the battle.

Another interesting side note is that during the battles of that time, the flag bearers occupied a very important position in war. The flag was always given to individuals who were brave and steadfast in the face of danger. Their steadfastness, courage, and their flaunting of the flag in the face of the enemy would create feelings of fortitude and determination in the ranks of the fighters. Conversely, if this flag bearer was killed, and the flag was captured or destroyed, then the army would be shaken in spirit and demoralized. So before every battle, several of the most courageous members of the army were selected as flag bearers. If one fell, then the others would take his place, and this would continue until all the replacements were exhausted. In this battle, the Quraysh

likewise selected several flag bearers from the tribe of 'Banī 'Abd al-Dār', who were known for their courage.

Shortly after the battle began, the flag bearers who had been selected from the polytheist's army, began to be killed one after another, all by the capable hands of Imam 'Alī ('a). When the Quraysh saw this, fear and weakness swept through their ranks and they began to flee from the battlefield.

It has been narrated from Imam Ṣādiq ('a) that: "In the Battle of Uḥud, the flag bearers of the army of the Quraysh were nine individuals. All of them were killed by 'Alī ('a)".[35] Ibn Athīr also narrates: "The person who defeated the flag bearers of the Quraysh was 'Alī ('a)".[36]

In another tradition narrated by Shaykh Ṣadūq, Imam 'Alī ('a) used this event of the flag bearers as a testament against the six man council that was established after 'Umar's death in order to select a caliph. He said: "I bind you all to this oath before God, was there any person except me who killed the nine flag bearers of the tribe of Banī 'Abd al-Dār in the Battle of Uḥud?" Then he added: "And after these nine were killed, did not their slave, who had an immense stature, by the name of Ṣaw'ab come to the battlefield, while his mouth was foaming and his eyes were red with anger and say that for the revenge of his masters he would accept only the death of Muḥammad? When you saw him you become stunned and moved away from him, but I went towards him for battle; we fought and exchanged blows and then I struck him with such a blow that he was cut into two pieces." All the members of the council confirmed Imam 'Alī's ('a) words.[37]

When the army of the Quraysh began an all-out retreat, some of the 50 archers who were under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr, wanted to leave their position and go towards the main battlefield with the intention of gathering

---

[35] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 47.

[36] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 154.

[37] Al-Khiṣāl, Edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, Manshūrāt Jāmi'ah' al-Mudarisīn Fī Ḥawzah al-'Ilmiyah Biqum, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 560

war booty. ʿAbdullah reminded them of the Prophet's (ṣ) orders, but they didn't pay any heed, and over forty of them left the hilltop and descended. ʿAbdullah ibn Jubayr was left alone with no more than ten fighters.

At this time Khālid ibn Walīd, who commanded a mounted cavalry division of the polytheists, and had been waiting in ambush for just such a moment, saw his opportunity and attacked the group. After killing them, he began an attack from the rear position of the Muslims. This coincided with the Qurayshī flag being raised by a woman named ʿAmrah bint ʿAlqamah, who had come to the battlefield in order to encourage the soldiers.

From this moment on, the situation began to reverse itself; the discipline and order that the Muslims had possessed fell apart and their ranks became chaotic. The lines of communication between the commanders and the troops were disrupted, and the Muslims were defeated. Nearly seventy individuals from among the ranks of the Muslim fighters were martyred; among them were Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and Muṣʿab ibn ʿUmayr.

Additionally, a rumor was spread throughout the battlefield that the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) had been killed. This rumor shook many of the Muslims to their core. Under the strong onslaught and with the gathering confusion of this rumor, many of the Muslims lost heart, retreated, and became scattered. At the battlefield, the number of individuals that were left with the Prophet (ṣ) could only be counted with one's hand. This was now a critical time where the fate and future of Islam was to be determined.

It was at this juncture that Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) greatness once again manifested itself and he, with unparalleled courage and valor, fought alongside the Prophet (ṣ) and defended him against the waves of attack that repeatedly rushed towards him.

Ibn Athīr has written that: "The Prophet (ṣ) saw that a group of the polytheists were preparing for an attack. He

ordered ʿAlī (ʿa) to attack them. When he attacked them and killed a number of them, they dispersed. The Prophet (ṣ) then saw another group preparing to attack, and commanded ʿAlī (ʿa) to attack them as well. ʿAlī (ʿa) attacked them, killing a number of them, and causing the rest to disperse. At this point the Angel of Revelation came down and said to the Prophet (ṣ): 'This is the pinnacle of selflessness and self sacrifice which ʿAlī (ʿa) has shown of himself.' The Prophet of God (ṣ) said: 'He is from me and I am from him.' At this time a sound was heard from the heavens, which was saying: 'There is no sword but Dhūl Fiqār and there is no youth but ʿAlī.'"[38]

Likewise, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd has written:

"At the time when most of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) began to run away, various groups of the enemy began to go towards him. A group from the tribe of 'Banī Kananah' and another group from the tribe of 'Banī ʿAbd Manāt' were present amongst these groups. Within these two groups there were four men who were renowned in Arabia for their fighting prowess. These groups began an attack on the Prophet (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) ordered ʿAlī (ʿa) to action by saying: Block this group's attack.

ʿAlī (ʿa), who was fighting without a horse as support, attacked the group, which numbered 50 individuals, and dispersed them. Several times, they regrouped and tried to attack, but each time the Imam (ʿa) repelled their attack and dispersed them. In these attacks the four men who were renowned for their bravery were killed alongside ten other individuals whose names have not been recorded in the books of history."

The Angel Gabriel told the Holy Prophet (ṣ): "Truly ʿAlī (ʿa) is engaged in a great act of self sacrifice; the angels are amazed and in wonderment about the manner of his self sacrifice." The Prophet (ṣ) replied: "Why should it not be so, for he is from me and I am from him." Gabriel said: "I am

[38] Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 154.

also from you." That day a sound was repeatedly heard from the heavens proclaiming: "There is no sword but Dhūl Fiqār and there is no youth but 'Alī." The sound was heard, but the one who was proclaiming it could not be seen. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) was asked as to who was saying these words. He replied that it was none other than the Angel Gabriel.[39]

C- During the Battle of Aḥzāb (The Confederates)

The Battle of Aḥzāb was a battle which put together all of the tribes and groups which were opposed to Islam and unified them for a final and complete assault on the new faith. Some historians have put the number of the polytheist's army at more than ten thousand men, while the Muslims numbered only about three thousand.

The heads of the Quraysh, who were personally leading this war expedition, had prepared their army well in terms of fighters and equipment. With their level of planning and preparation, they were completely certain that the Muslims would be wiped out, and they would finally get rid of Muḥammad (ṣ) and his followers. When news of the war expedition reached the Prophet (ṣ), he established a war council in order to decide the best course of action. During the gathering, one of the Muslims by the name of Salmān gave a suggestion that they construct a trench in the areas around the city which were susceptible to attack. This would block access to the oncoming army and they would be stopped in their tracks. This suggestion was approved, and through the hard work and efforts of the Muslims, the immense trench was constructed in just a few days. Its width was wide enough that a fighter on horseback could not jump over it and deep

---

[39] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 14, p. 253. Khawārizmī, in his book al-Manāt on page 223, narrates that 'Alī (a), in the matter of the nomination of the caliph, pointed to this issue as proof against the members of the six person council.

enough that if someone were to enter it, they couldn't easily come out.

Soon the army of the polytheists, assisted by a local Jewish tribe, arrived on the scene. The army had imagined that, just as with previous engagements, they would meet the Muslims in battle on the outskirts of the city. However, when they arrived, there were no signs of the Muslims, and so they were forced to continue towards the city. As they approached the city, they were stunned to see a profoundly wide and deep trench, which wound its way all throughout the areas susceptible to attack. They became bewildered since the use of such a stratagem was something the Arabs had never encountered before. With no other option at hand, they laid siege to the city and had their men surround it.

This siege, according to some traditions, lasted approximately one month. Whenever the soldiers would decide to encroach upon the trench and cross it, the Muslims would be in their positions waiting for them. The Muslims were positioned at short distances from each other, all across the length of the trench, and they would use arrows and stones to repel the invaders. There was a state of constant attack which continued through the days and the nights, and neither of the two sides could gain a victory over the other.

The siege of Medina, with such a great number of fighters, severely weakened the morale of the Muslims. They were almost literally staring ten thousand well equipped enemy soldiers in the face. The situation was worsened when news of the betrayal of a tribe of local Jews was confirmed. This tribe of neighboring Jews, by the name of Banī Qurayẓah, were a tribe who had signed a compact with the Muslims. In spite of their pledge, they had broken their treaty and promised the polytheists their help. They had promised that as soon as the polytheists were able to cross the trench, they would attack the Muslims from behind.

Dangerous Days

In Surah Aḥzāb, the Holy Quran beautifully lays out the critical situation of the Muslims during the days of the siege: "Oh you who have faith! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when the hosts came at you, and We sent against them a gale and hosts whom you did not see. And Allah sees best what you do. When they came at you from above and below you and when the eyes rolled [with fear] and the hearts leapt to the throats, and you entertained misgivings about Allah, it was there that the faithful were tested and jolted with a severe agitation. And when the hypocrites were saying, as well as those in whose hearts is a sickness, 'Allah and His Apostle did not promise us [anything] except delusion.' And when a group of them said, 'O people of Yathrib! This is not a place for you, so go back!' And a group of them sought the Prophet's permission saying, 'Our homes lie exposed [to the enemy]', although they were not exposed. They only sought to flee. Had they been invaded from its flanks and had they been asked to apostatize, they would have done so with only a mild hesitation... "[40]

Still, given the difficult position of the Muslims, the trench served its purpose and blocked access to the polytheist's army. The weather soon turned as well and became bitterly cold. The polytheists had brought only enough provisions and supplies for a short-term war; they were now running low on supplies and equipment. They had envisaged a war that would last approximately the same amount of time as the previous wars of Badr and Uḥud. As the siege dragged on, their level of supplies began to drop critically and this laid extra pressure on the army. Their enthusiasm and passion for war quickly faded, and their morale rapidly dropped.

The heads of the army realized that they had no choice but to quickly push through some of their best forces and break

[40] Surah Aḥzāb, Verses 8 - 14.

the siege. Five warriors who were known for their courage and supremacy in war pushed their horses into a gallop, and finding a narrow spot in the trench, spurred their horses on and jumped over the length of the trench. When they reached the other side, they shouted for equals to engage in one on one, as was the custom of the Arabs.

One of these fighters was a champion famous amongst the Arabs by the name of 'Amr ibn 'Abdu Wudd. He was considered to be one of the strongest and bravest of the Arab fighters, and his strength was famously compared to 1,000 regular fighting men. At one time, he had also been victorious in a land called 'Yalīl' against a large group of fighters, and therefore, he was popularly known as the 'Fāris Yalīl'. He had participated in the Battle of Badr and had been wounded during the course of battle; as a result of his injuries, he had not been able to participate in Uḥud. For this reason, he wished to truly show himself at the Battle of Aḥzāb so that he could make up for his absence in the previous battle.

'Amr, after passing over the trench, yelled out: "Who will fight me?" Since no one from amongst the Muslims prepared to meet his challenge, he became even more daring and mocked the beliefs of the Muslims. He said: "You are people who say that your war dead go to heaven, while our war dead go to hell! Is there no one amongst you whom I can send to heaven or that he sends me to hell?"

Then he sang out an epic war poem that was customary amongst the Arabs during battle. Amongst the lines he sang was one line where he said: "I have yelled out my challenge for an opponent amongst your army for so long that I have lost my voice." 'Amr's shouts and boasts had put such fear into the hearts of the Muslims that they had become like stones without the power of movement or reaction.[41]

Whenever 'Amr would yell out his challenge for an

[41] Wāqidī shows the fear of the Muslims with a line which says: "It was as if birds were sitting on their heads." Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn Wāqidī, al-Maghāzī, Edited by: Marsandense Jones, Beirut, Mu'assasah al-'Alamī, vol. 2, p. 470.

opponent, only one man would be seen rising in response, and that was ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa). He would rise up and ask permission from the Prophet (ṣ) to go towards the battlefield but the Prophet (ṣ) would refuse. This action was repeated three times. After the third time that Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) asked for permission to engage, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) told ʿAlī (ʿa): "(Don't you know that) this is ʿAmr ibn ʿAbdu Wudd!" ʿAlī (ʿa) replied: "And I am ʿAlī."[42]

Immediately, the Prophet (ṣ) gave his consent. He then took his own sword and gave it to Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Then, he took his turban and wrapped it around Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) head and prayed for him. As Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was en route towards the battlefield, the Prophet (ṣ) said: "The whole of Islam has now been arrayed against the whole of disbelief."[43]

This line clearly shows that the upcoming battle and the victory of either opponent over his adversary would mean the complete victory of Islam over disbelief or vice versa. To phrase this differently, this was the one battle which would decide the fate of Islam's future and whether it would prevail or be overtaken by polytheism.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) went towards ʿAmr while he was unmounted and on foot. When he came face to face with him he said: "You had made a promise to yourself that if a man from the tribe of the Quraysh came to you and asked you for one of three things, you would grant him his request." ʿAmr replied: "It is so." ʿAlī then said: "My first request is that you accept the religion of Islam." He replied: "Do not ask this of me." ʿAlī (ʿa) replied: "Then turn away from this war, leave this place, and leave the fate of Muḥammad (ṣ) to others. If he is truthful in what he claims, then you shall become fortunate and blessed, and if his claim is other than truthful, then you

---

[42] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 13, p. 248.

[43] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 20, p. 215 (narrated from Kirājakī).

shall be successful in what you seek without any need for this battle." He replied: "The women of the Quraysh will never accept such an action from me. I have sworn an oath, that until I get my revenge on Muḥammad I shall not apply oil to my hair." ʿAlī (ʿa) then declared: "Then get off your horse and prepare for battle." ʿAmr said: "I never thought that any of the Arabs would ask such a thing of me. I do like for you to be killed by my hands, for your father was my friend. Return back from where you came, you are only a youth!" ʿAlī replied: "But know that I would like to kill you."

ʿAmr became enraged at this, and with the utmost arrogance, unmounted from his horse. He rushed towards ʿAlī (ʿa) for the attack. The two fighters engaged and a hard battle ensued. ʿAmr, when he saw an opportunity, struck a very hard blow at ʿAlī's (ʿa) head. ʿAlī (ʿa) blocked the blow with his shield, but his shield broke in two from the severity of the blow, and his head was cut. At this very moment, ʿAlī (ʿa) saw an opportunity and struck a hard blow at ʿAmr, knocking him to the ground. A cloud of dust and dirt had gathered, and the view of the battle was obscured for the two armies; everyone was waiting in anticipation of what had happened. Suddenly, the sound of ʿAlī (ʿa) reciting a 'Takbīr'[44] filled the air. The Muslims began to shout with happiness and everyone understood that ʿAlī (ʿa) had been the victor against one of the greatest fighters of the time.[45]

The death of ʿAmr caused the other four people who had come alongside him and who were waiting to see the results of the battle, to flee. Three of them were able to cross over the trench and escape, but one of them was not successful and fell into the trench, along with his horse. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) followed after him, entered the trench, and killed him. With the killing of these Arab warriors, the army of the polytheists completely lost their morale and spirit of war, and felt hopeless of being

---

[44] The phrase 'God is Greater'

[45] Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Wāqidī, al-Maghāzī, Edited by: Marsandense Jones, Beirut, Mu'assasah al-'Alamī, (Bī Tā) vol. 2, p. 471.

able to invade Medina. Each of the individual tribes began to think of ways to return back to their homes. The last blow against their army came from an act of God, in the form of severe winds and furious tempests. Seeing the utter desperation of the situation, the tribes became completely hopeless and left for their ancestral homes in frustration.[46]

The Holy Prophet (ṣ), in praise of the feat performed by ʿAlī (ʿa), said: "If this action, which you performed today, were to be compared with the whole of my nation's actions, it would be considered superior. This is because with the killing of ʿAmr, no house from the house of the polytheists remains but that disgrace and wretchedness has entered into it, and no house of the Muslims remains, but that honor and dignity has been added to it."[47]

The famous narrator of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Hākim Nayshābūrī, has narrated what the Prophet (ṣ) said about Imam ʿAlī (ʿa): "During the Battle of the Trench, the fight of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa) against ʿAmr ibn ʿAbdu Wudd, is superior to all of the deeds my nation will complete until the Day of Judgment."

The philosophy behind these words is clear: On that day, he religion of Islam and the Holy Quran were situated on a precipice from a military perspective, and these were some of the most critical moments for the new religion. It was an event which would influence the very fate of the religion. The one individual who saved Islam and guaranteed its existence until the Day of Judgment by allowing it to take root, was none other than Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Hence, all of the worship which the Muslims have completed or will complete from that moment onwards until the Day of Judgment is indebted to that one act

---

[46] The episode of Imam ʿAlī's (a) fateful battle with ʿAmr ibn ʿAbdu Wadd has been narrated, with slight differences in words, in the following texts:
- Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 20, p. 203-206.
- Al-Khiṣāl, Edited by: ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, Jāmiʿah al-Mudarisīn Fī Ḥawzah al-ʿIlmiyah Qum, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 560.

[47] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 20, p. 216.

of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa).

D - The Victor over the Fortresses of Khaybar

During the 7th year Hijrī, the Prophet (ṣ) decided to disarm the Jews of Khaybar. His purpose in doing this was twofold:

1. Firstly, Khaybar had become a focal point for various plots and subterfuges against the new Muslim government. The inhabitants of these fortresses had collaborated numerous times with the enemies of the Muslims in attacking the city of Medina. They had played an especially strong role in regards to the War of Aḥzāb, where they played a critical role in strengthening and aiding the enemy.
2. During this time, Persia and Rome were two of the main powers in existence, and they were constantly in a state of war with each other. With the advent of Islam, the Muslims became a sort of third rising power, which was unacceptable and intolerable for the first two. It was not improbable that in the event of an attack by one of these super powers, the people of Khaybar would join hands and become proxies for fighting against the Muslims. They had acted similarly in the past, when they encouraged the polytheists to attack the Muslims, and it was not farfetched that they would try to instigate the two superpowers against the newly formed faith.

These were issues which the Prophet (ṣ) had in mind when he departed, alongside with 1,600 soldiers, towards the fortresses of Khaybar. The fortresses of Khaybar were very well built and possessed immense fortifications and a full array of defensive equipment. Moreover, it was full of battle hardened men who were very willing to defend it at any cost.

With the brave feats and valor of the Muslim army, the fortresses fell one by one, but the Muslim victories were slow and arduous. Soon, all of them had fallen except for one: 'Qāmūs'. This was the largest of the fortresses and a sizable

number of the bravest fighters were assembled there. At this last fortress, the fighters were putting up fierce resistance and so the Muslim soldiers were not able to gain the upper hand over the enemy.

At the same time, the Prophet (ṣ) was ill with a severe headache and he was not able to personally command the operation. Every day he would turn over the flag to one of the Muslims and give him the responsibility of sacking the fortress. Unfortunately, one after the other, they would return without having achieved this goal. One day the flag was given to Abū Bakr and the day after it was given to ʿUmar, but both of them returned without having been successful.

This situation weighed heavily on the Holy Prophet (ṣ). When he saw these circumstances, he said: "Tomorrow I will give this flag to an individual through whom God will defeat this fortress. This is a person who loves God and his Prophet (ṣ), and whom God and his Prophet (ṣ) also love."[48]

That night, all of the Prophet's (ṣ) companions were thinking about what he had said and wondering whom the flag would be given to. When morning broke, all the companions surrounded the tent of the Prophet (ṣ) and each individual was hoping that the flag would be given to him on that day. Then the Prophet (ṣ) spoke, saying: "Where is ʿAlī?" They answered that he is afflicted with great pain in his eyes and he is resting. The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Bring him." When Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) came, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) made a prayer for his eyes, and by the blessing of that prayer, the pain was cured. Then the Prophet (ṣ) put the flag into ʿAlī's (ʿa) hands. ʿAlī (ʿa) said: "Oh Prophet of God (ṣ), I will fight with them to such a degree that they will submit to Islam." The Prophet (ṣ) replied: "Move towards them and when you reach their fortress, first invite them towards Islam and remind them of their duty towards accepting God's religion. I swear by God that if one person amongst them gains salvation through your

[48] Al-Istīʿāb Fī Maʿrifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Dār Aḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 36.

hands, it is better than if you were the possessor of red haired camels."[49] Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) departed for his mission, and with unparalleled courage and perseverance, he conquered the fortress.

The Ambassador and Deputy of the Prophet

It had been more than 20 years since the inception of Islam in the mainland of Arabia. The logic of Islam had spread throughout the lands and most of the Arabs had become aware that idols and idol worshiping were nothing but a blind following of their ancestors. They had come to realize that idols were not just incapable of helping people, but they were even incapable of helping themselves. In short, they had realized that idol worship was worthless and without any benefit for them.

The people who had listened to the words of the Prophet (ṣ) with open minds and hearts had realized the truth of Islam and the falsehood of idol worship, and they had submitted themselves to the way of Islam. When the Prophet (ṣ) took over Mecca, religious preachers were especially able to propagate the religion and spread the Islamic way of life. The results of this propagation was that the people in the nearby cities, districts, and villages began to destroy their idols and turn towards the religion of Islam. In most of the areas of the Arabian Peninsula, the call of Islam could be heard resonating amongst the people.

Unfortunately, there still existed a prejudiced and ignorant class, for whom the leaving of old ideas and beliefs was very difficult, and who were caught up in an internal struggle with themselves. This group could not bear to leave their old beliefs, even though these caused a number of ethical, moral, and social problems.

At this juncture, the time had come for the Prophet (ṣ) to use military action to remove all external traces of idol

---

[49] Red haired camels were the most superior and expensive of all camels at that time.

worship. It was time to destroy idol worship at the root level since it was the root cause of many ethical and social ills. In reality, idol worship had destroyed the potential which people had in moving towards perfection and progress.

It was at this time that the verses of Surah Barā'ah were revealed. The Prophet (ṣ) was given the mission of announcing God's aversion to the polytheists and their actions at the Ḥajj rites. The Ḥajj was a ceremony which gathered pilgrims from all the various parts of the Ḥijāz region to the city of Mecca for worship. It had become a center of idol worship during the Prophet's (ṣ) time. The Prophet (ṣ) was to give the idol worshipers notice that they must change their ways and that they were to be given four month's notice to implement these changes.

The verses of Surah Barā'ah were revealed at a time when the Prophet (ṣ) had not made a decision for participating in the Ḥajj ceremony of that year. During the previous year, which was the year Mecca was conquered, the Prophet (ṣ) had visited the Kaaba and had made a decision to visit again in 2 year's time (which would later be called the Ḥajjatu al-Widā). Hence, the Prophet (ṣ) had to select someone else to go on his behalf and deliver the divine message. He selected Abū Bakr for this assignment and taught him the initial verses of Surah Barā'ah. He then dispatched him towards Mecca, along with 40 men, in order that they reach the 'Feast of the Sacrifice' and read their message.

As Abū Bakr was en route to Mecca, a divine message was suddenly revealed, and it commanded the Prophet (ṣ) that this message was only to be delivered by himself or from someone who was 'from him'. It was commanded that no one else had the authority to deliver this message.

The Prophet (ṣ) quickly summoned Imam 'Alī ('a) and ordered him to go towards Mecca. He was to intercept Abū Bakr on the way, and tell him that a divine revelation had been revealed, commanding the Prophet (ṣ) that the verses be delivered either by himself or from an 'individual who was

from him'. Clearly, the undertaking of this work had been turned over to Imam 'Alī ('a). Imam 'Alī ('a) went towards Mecca, while riding on the Prophets (ṣ) own camel, alongside with Jābir and a few other of the Prophet's (ṣ) companions. He soon overtook Abū Bakr and reiterated the Prophet's (ṣ) words; with this, Abū Bakr handed over his mission to him.

Imam 'Alī ('a) entered the city of Mecca during the tenth day of Dhī al-Ḥijjah. He went to the forward area of Jamara' 'Aqabah, and with a loud and far-reaching voice, recited the initial verses of Surah Barā'ah. He then announced the four point notice of the Prophet (ṣ), and this message was heard by all the participants of the Ḥajj.[50]

With the announcement of this message, the polytheists became aware that they had only four month's time to decide on a course of action and make clear their future intentions with the Islamic government. The verses of the Quran and the Prophet's (ṣ) announcement had a strange effect on the polytheists, and before the four months had even come to an end, they began to come to the Prophet (ṣ) in droves and accepted Islam. The tenth year had not yet concluded when the last external vestiges of polytheism had been completely effaced from the lands of the Ḥijāz.

When Abū Bakr was recalled from his delivery of the Prophet's (ṣ) message, he became very upset, and upon returning to Medina, he went to the Prophet (ṣ) and began to complain. He said: "You saw me worthy of doing this work (delivering the verses and the Prophet's announcement), but no time had passed when you dismissed me and set me aside. Did a divine command reach you from God about this matter?" The Prophet answered in response: "The Angel of Revelation came down and said that besides me or someone who is from me, no one else has the authority of this

[50] The four point announcement was as follows: A- The annulment of all treaties with the polytheists. B- Removal of the right of the polytheist's participation in the Ḥajj rites. C- The forbiddance of doing the circumambulation of Ḥajj while naked (this had become a common practice during that time). D- The forbiddance of the polytheists entering into the Masjid al-Ḥarām.

mission."[51]

4 – From the Passing of the Prophet until the Caliphate of Imam ʿAlī

Before beginning this section, let us first keep in mind an important point. During the time period of the Imamate, beginning from the time of the passing of the Prophet (ṣ) (which occurred in the month of Ṣafar during the 11th year Hijrī) until the passing of Imam Ḥasan ʿAskarī (ʿa) (which occurred during the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal during the year 260 Hijrī), there existed four approximate eras. Each of these eras possessed their own particularities and differences in regards to how the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) worked towards their goals. These four eras were:

1- The period of patience and compromise of Imam Ali (ʿa) with the ruling powers of the time. This period comprises of 25 years, beginning with the passing of the Prophet (ṣ) (11 Hijrī) until the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) (35 Hijrī).

2- The era of the Imams (ʿa) reaching the caliphate. This era includes the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), which lasted 4 years and 9 months, as well as the few months that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was caliph. Even with the shortness of this period and the associated problems and difficulties, this period is still considered as one of the brightest times in the history of the Islamic government.

3- The era of short-term constructive change in order to bring about an Islamic government. This era includes the 20 years from the peace of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) (which took place during 41 Hijrī) until the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) during the month of Muḥarram in the 61st year Hijrī. After the episode of the peace, the

[51] Ālūsī Baghdādī, Maḥmūd, Rūh al-Maʿānī, Second Print, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 1 (Commentary on Surah Tawbah).

semi-secretive struggle of the Shias for the rightful return of power to the Imams ('a) began. This return wasn't something impossible to achieve and with the death of Mū'āwīya it became even more of a reality.

4- This era is a continuation of the last stage but it lasted for a longer period of time. This period lasted almost two centuries, and was comprised of various defeats and victories, ending with a final victory in the field of ideology.[52]

The Passing of the Holy Prophet and the Issue of Leadership

After the Prophet (ṣ), Imam 'Alī ('a) was the most worthy and able individual for administering the Muslim society. In the Muslim world, in terms of virtue, piety, jurisprudential capability, judgment, military prowess, striving in the path of God, and all of the human perfections and meritorious attributes, no one even came close to his acheivements.

Due to this worthiness, Imam 'Alī ('a) had been introduced as the future leader of the Muslims countless times. The most important of these was the event of Ghadīr Khum. It was in fact expected that after the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), Imam 'Alī ('a) would immediately take the reins of power and take over the government of the Muslims. Unfortunately, this never took place and the course of the Islamic caliphate, after the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), took a much different path. Imam 'Alī ('a) was left out of the government's political and administrative decision making process.

The Two Paths

Imam 'Alī ('a) did not tolerate this aberrant course which the caliphate had taken. He repeatedly criticized and protested

---

[52] Ayatollah Khāmīnīī, Sayyid 'Alī, Pīshvāye Ṣādiq, Tehran, Sayyid Jamāl Publications, p. 21.

against the caliph and his supporters and admonished them with clear reasoning and proofs. With the passing of time, it became clear that the use of reason did not have much of an effect, and the caliph and his supporters were bent on protecting and continuing their power and rule. At this point, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was situated at a critical juncture, which would decide the fate of Islam.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was faced with two options. The first was that he could gather the people who recognized the current government as illegitimate, and through the use of force, regain the caliphate. The second was that he could endure the current situation, and alongside this, help solve the many problems that the Muslims were facing. One interesting point that should be mentioned is that for truly pious rulers, power is not considered as the end goal. The end goal is something higher and more valuable than increasing one's status and ability to rule. In fact, the purpose of rule and governance is only something which gives fulfilment to these end goals; in essence, it is only a means to an end.

Therefore, if one day, a ruler is situated between two paths where he must choose between the end goal and his position of leadership, he must let go of his position and know that the end goal is foremost in importance. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was faced with just such a situation and he selected the second path. He judged the situation of the time and his society's condition, and reached the conclusion that if he were to go after the reclaiming of the caliphate, then a situation would come about in which all of the work of the Prophet (ṣ) and the blood of the martyrs, who had been killed in the way of strengthening and defending Islam, would be squandered.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), in his sermon of Shiqshiqīya spoke of the difficult choice he made and the reason behind his selection of the second path. He said: "...But I was forced to close my eyes to this usurpation and turn my face away from the calamity. I was in dire straits; there were two alternatives before me: either to fight for my rights without the help of

supporters, or to patiently endure the bereavement. The endurance was going to be of such sadness and long duration that during this period young men would become old, the old would lose their vitality and the faithful would end their days unsuccessfully trying to improve the situation.

After having weighed the situation carefully, I came to the conclusion that the wisest course of action was for me to face the disaster with patience and courage. Therefore, I bore it all patiently, though the very thought of having my just rights usurped, was extremely painful and saddening to me..."[53]

Here Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) points to his chosen path of patience in the face of the usurpation of the caliphate and the deviation of the system of Islamic government. He bases his patience on the fact that any other action would have caused the foundations of Islam to weaken and crumble. When ʿUthmān was chosen as caliph by the other members of the six man committee, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) faced the others and said:

"You have certainly known that I have the greatest right towards the position of the caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of the Muslims remains intact, and there is no oppression in it save on myself, I shall keep quiet seeking reward for it (from Allah) and keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire."[54]

Domestic and Foreign Dangers

As mentioned previously, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) deliberated over the dangers which faced the Muslim community if he chose to make an armed uprising. He came to the conclusion that it was best to abstain from initiating a movement at that period in time. One may wonder about the types of dangers which the Muslim community faced during that time. These

---

[53] Nahj al-Balāghah, Jaʿfar ʿAskarī, Sermon 3.

[54] Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 74.

domestic and foreign dangers, and the various considerations and obstacles which the Imam ('a) had to reflect upon, which removed the possibility of an armed uprising, can be divided into the following:

1- The first reason was that if Imam 'Alī ('a) was to make an armed uprising and reclaim the caliphate, then many of his closest and strongest followers would be killed. These were people who believed whole-heartedly in his right of governance and Imamate. In addition to the loss of this group, there was another considerable group of the Prophet's companions who were opposed to the caliphate of Imam 'Alī ('a) while having no other issues with him. Even though this group was wrong to stand on old grudges and resentments, they were still a source of support against polytheism, idol worship, and the Christian and Jewish powers of the time. With the loss of this group, the power of Islam would have been considerably weakened.

As Imam 'Alī ('a) was on his way to Baṣrah in order to fight against the 'Pledge Breakers' (Ṭalḥah and Zubayr), he pointed out this critical issue and said: "When God took the soul of his Prophet (ṣ), the Quraysh, through their self interest, nominated themselves over us. Even though we were the most worthy of rule, they usurped our rights. I saw that patience and toleration is better than creating divisions amongst the Muslims and the spilling of their blood. The Muslim community, due to the newness of their faith, was much like a large leather container that was brimming over with milk. The least slack and irresolution would spoil it, and the least movement would spill it."[55]

2- The second reason was that many of the people who had converted to Islam during the last years of the Prophet (ṣ) had not yet had sufficient Islamic education and so the light of

[55] Subḥānī, Ja'far, A Deep Look at the Life of 'Alī (a), Qum, Jahān Ārā, p. 222, narrated from the Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah of Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd.

faith had not fully penetrated into their hearts. When news spread of the Prophet's (ṣ) passing, a group of these people raised the flag of apostasy and reverted to idol worship. They expressed hostility against the government in Medina and refused to pay their Islamic taxes. At the same time, they threatened Medina with attack through the initiation of military maneuvers. The first action of the new government was to raise an army of the Muslims and send them into battle against these apostates. Through the difficult battles which followed, the rebellion was quelled and the threat against the newly formed community of Muslims was eliminated.[56]

It is clear that the Muslims were at a critical juncture in their development and progress. At a time when the Muslims were under the threat of attack, it would have been dangerous for the Imam ('a) to raise another flag and begin a battle for the caliphate.

In a letter which he had written to the people of Egypt, Imam 'Alī ('a) emphasizes this point and says:

"When the Holy Prophet (ṣ) passed away, the Muslims started a tug-of-war for the caliphate. I swear by Allah that at that juncture I could not have even imagined that the Arabs would snatch the seat of the caliphate from the family and descendants of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and that they would be swearing the oath of allegiance for the caliphate to a different person. At every stage, I kept myself aloof from that struggle of supremacy and power politics until I found the heretics had openly taken to heresy and schism, and were trying to undermine and ruin the religion preached by our Holy Prophet (ṣ). I felt afraid that, after seeing and recognizing the evil, if I did not stand up to help Islam and the Muslims, it would be a worse calamity to me than my losing authority and power over you, which was only a transient and short-lived affair. Therefore, when I stood up amidst the sweeping surge of innovations and schisms, the dark clouds of heresy

[56] This cannot be taken as an endorsement of the actions of Abū Bakr's government. For example, refer to the killing of Mālik ibn Nuwayrah.

dispersed, falsehood and schism were crushed and the religion was saved."[57]

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), during the initial days of his caliphate, mentioned this point during the course of a sermon. ʿAbdullah ibn Junādah is quoted as saying: "I had left Mecca and traveled to Medina during the early days of ʿAlī's (ʿa) caliphate when I saw the people gathered in the Prophet's mosque and awaiting ʿAlī's (ʿa) arrival. Suddenly ʿAlī (ʿa) came out of his house while carrying his sword and took his seat at the pulpit. All the people began to look intently at him. After praising and glorifying God, he began his speech as such:

'Oh people, know that on the day our beloved Prophet (ṣ) left from amongst us, we did not think that anyone would dispute and compete with us on the matter of the government which he had established. We did not think that anyone would look at it with covetous eyes, for we were his heirs, guardians, and family. In spite of our expectations, a group from our tribe transgressed upon our rights and took the caliphate away from us and the government fell into the hands of others...

I swear by God that if it was not for the fear of schism, disunity, and discord amongst the Muslims, and if there was no danger that polytheism and idol worship would once again return to the lands of Islam and completely destroy the religion, then we would have acted in a wholly different manner with them.'" [58]

3- In addition to the dangers of the apostates, a group of people appeared who claimed to be prophets. These included people such as Musaylamah, Ṭulayḥah, and Sajāḥ. They gathered supporters and military forces around themselves, and had the intention of attacking Medina. In the ensuing

---

[57] Nahj al-Balāghah, Letter 62.

[58] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 307.

battle, these groups were soundly defeated only due to the unity and perseverance of the Muslim army. If the Muslims had not been unified, then there is no saying as to how far these groups would have succeeded in their endeavors.

4- Another real threat to the newly formed community was an attack by the Roman Empire, which was one of the superpowers of that time. Up until that time, the Muslims and Romans had come face to face three times in various conflicts. The Romans considered them to be a serious threat and were waiting for the right opportunity to attack their center of power. If Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) had engaged in an armed uprising, then through the weakening of the Muslim's internal power balance, there would have arisen an easy opportunity for the Romans to attack.

By keeping these above points in mind, it becomes clear why Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) chose patience over an armed uprising and how he, through his patience, prudence, and far sightedness, saved the Muslim community from great dangers. If Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) did not fear for the unity of the Muslims and the consequences of schism, then he would have never allowed for the government of the Muslims to fall out of the hands of the divinely selected guardians and into the hands of others.

The Activities of Imam ʿAlī during the Time of the Three Caliphs

Some of the Imam's activities and work during this time included:

1- His acts of worship and servitude to God. These acts were so profound and deep that Imam Sajjād (ʿa), who was known for his acts of worship considered his acts to be nothing in comparison to the acts of his grandfather.

2- His commentary of the Holy Quran and the solving of the various mysteries of its verses. He also trained and educated a number of students, such as ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbbās, who later became one of the greatest commentators amongst the companions.

3- Answering the questions of various scholars from throughout the world, including Jewish and Christian scholars. Many of these individuals would travel to Medina from far away lands in order to research the new religion. When they would ask their questions, there was no one but Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) who had a sufficient expertise in the Bible and the Torah who could answer them. If it had not been for ʿAlī (ʿa), the Muslim community would have been placed in an unacceptable position in the face of these questions. Whenever Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) would answer these questions with precision and completeness, the faces of the caliphs, who were sitting in the place of the Prophet (ṣ), would show deep amazement and wonder.

4- He would also answer and expound upon religious rulings in light of new incidents which had recently arisen amongst the Muslims. These were issues which had no precedence in past times. Some of these incidents were so complicated that the judges were completely dumbfounded and unable to make a ruling. If Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), who had been confirmed by the Prophet (ṣ) as being the most knowledgeable in the laws and principles of Islam was not amongst the Muslims, many of the new issues which came up in those early days would still be considered to be unsolvable mysteries.

It was these new issues, which came about after the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), that required an aware and infallible Imam to be amongst the people. This individual would have to be an expert in the principles and branches of religion just like the Prophet (ṣ), and have such a wide and deep knowledge that it would prevent the Muslim community from deviating and being forced to use tools such as analogies or even guesswork to derive their religious rulings. Amongst the companions, there was no one but Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) who had such qualifications and knowledge.

Some of Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) rulings and judgments, and his profound use of the verses of the Holy Quran, have been mentioned in the books of history and the books of tradition.

In fact, some of the scholars have written individual books on these topics.[59]

5- Another group, which had the proper purity of heart and basic spiritual foundations, was trained and educated by Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) in spiritual wayfaring. He trained them in order that they could reach the heights of spirituality, and use the eyes of their heart to see what their physical eyes could not.

6- He would work hard in order to secure and safeguard the lives of the poor and the indigent. He would even go as far as establishing orchards and excavating aqueducts and then giving them in the way of God.

7- Whenever the caliphate would become entangled in a political issue and reach a dead end, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) would be available as a trusted and experienced advisor. With his far sightedness, he would solve these problems and give direction to the Islamic government. Some of these consultations are recorded in the books of history, as well as in the Nahj al-Balāghah.

The Solving of the Political and Scientific Problems of the Caliphs

History shows us that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar would refer to Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) during the period of their caliphate and they benefitted greatly from his knowledge in matters related to politics, religious doctrine, spirituality, and Quranic exegesis. Let us take a look at a few of these incidents which have been recorded in history:

The War against the Romans

One of the diehard enemies of the new Islamic

---

[59] As an example, refer to the following books: 'The Judgments of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib by Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Tastarī. Also, refer to 'The Book of the Judgments of Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, collected by Sayyid Ismāʿīl Rasūl Zādih.

government was the Roman Empire, which was situated on the northern borders of the Muslim lands. The Prophet (ṣ), up to the very last minutes of his life, was heedful of the danger that they posed. During the 8th year Hijrī, a group under the command of Ja'far Ṭayyār was dispatched to the coastal area of Syria.

Unfortunately, during the battle, the army lost three of its top commanders and a number of its soldiers. Therefore, they returned back to Medina without having met their goals. To compensate for this defeat, the Prophet (ṣ) sent an army towards Tabūk in the 9th year Hijrī, but they did not come into contact with the enemy and they returned back to Medina. Even at the very last moments, as the Prophet (ṣ) lay dying, he was busy raising an army to go towards the coastal region of Syria to fight the Romans. For certain reasons however, this army did not leave Medina. With the army encamped only a few kilometers away from the city, the Prophet (ṣ) ended up passing away and the army returned.

After the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), the political situation in Medina stabilized with the newly formed government, and went from a situation of crisis to one of relative calm. Abū Bakr, who had taken the reins of power, was conflicted in regards to Rome, in spite of the Prophets (ṣ) precedent. He consulted with a group of the Prophet's companions, but they gave suggestions which didn't satisfy him. Then he consulted with Imam 'Alī ('a) and the Imam ('a) encouraged him towards enacting the Prophet's (ṣ) command. He added: "If you engage in battle, you shall be victorious." The caliph became pleased with the Imam's ('a) words and said: "You have foretold of good things and given glad tidings."[60]

The Consultations of the Second Caliph with Imam 'Alī

During the era of the Second Caliph, the Imam (a) was an important advisor and problem solver of many of his

[60] Ibn Wāḍih Ya'qūbī, The History of Ya'qūbī, vol. 3, p. 39.

political, scientific, and social problems. One example where the caliph benefited from his knowledge is narrated as follows: "During the 14th year Hijrī, a hard battle ensued between the Muslims and the Persians in a land called 'Qādisīyah'. This was the battle in which the Muslims were victorious and Rūstam Farokh Zād, the top commander of the Persian forces, was killed. With this victory, the whole of Iraq came under the political and military authority of the Muslims. Madā'in, the seat of Sāsānī (Persian) power, was also taken over by the Muslims and the Persian forces were forced to retreat into the interior of the country.

The Persian military leaders and their advisors were worried that the Muslim army would slowly advance and take over the whole of the country. To counter such a dangerous threat, 'Yazdegerd', the king of Persia, raised an army of 150,000 soldiers and put them under the command of 'Fīrūzān'. They were ordered to put a stop to any sudden attacks by the Muslims and, in the case of favorable conditions, were given permission to engage in offensive attacks themselves.

Sa'ad Waqqāṣ, who was the top commander of the Muslims forces (although, according to some narrations, this was 'Ammār Yāsir), sent a letter to the Second Caliph and made him aware of the movements of the enemy. Then he added: The army of Kūfah is ready to begin the battle and we are prepared to preemptively attack in order to create even further intimidation in their ranks.

The caliph went to the mosque and gathered together the leaders from amongst the companions. When they were gathered, he informed them of his decision to leave Medina and go towards the areas near Kūfah and Baṣrah and use those areas as a command post in order to lead the Muslim army. When he had finished speaking Ṭalḥah stood up and encouraged the caliph in his undertaking with flattering words. After this, 'Uthmān stood up and also encouraged the caliph. He then added: 'Write a letter to the army of Syria and

Yemen and have them all leave their posts and come join you. With such a great army, you will undoubtedly be victorious over the enemy.'

At this moment Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) stood up and said: 'In this matter, victory or defeat is not dependent on the smallness or greatness of forces. It is Allah's religion which He has raised above all faiths, and His army which he has mobilized and extended, until it has reached the point where it stands now... We hold a promise from Allah, and He will fulfil his promise and support his army.

The position of the head of government is that of the thread for a group of beads, for it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost, and they will never be gathered again. The Arabs today, even though small in number, are big because of Islam and strong because of unity. You should remain like an axis for them, and rotate the mill (of government) with (the help of) the Arabs, and be their root. Avoid battle, because if you leave this place, the Arabs will attack you from all sides and directions, until the unguarded places left behind by you will become more important than those before you.

If the Persians see you tomorrow nearby, they will say: "He is the chief of Arabia. If we do away with him, then we will be in peace." This will heighten their eagerness against you and their keenness to aim at you. You say that they have set out to fight against the Muslims. Well, Allah detests their setting out more than you do, and he is more capable of preventing what He detests. As regards to your idea about their (large) numbers, in the past we did not fight on the strength of large numbers, but we fought on the basis of Allah's support and assistance.'"[61]

When 'Umar heard Imam 'Alī's ('a) words, he accepted his suggestion and reconsidered leaving Medina.[62] It was in light

---

[61] Nahj al-Balāghah, First Edition, Sermon 146.

[62] - Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 8.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs

of these counsels which Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) offered, that ʿUmar would repeatedly say: "I seek protection with God from having a problem and not having Abū al-Ḥasan (Imam ʿAlī (ʿa)) present to solve it."[63]

From Imam ʿAlī's Caliphate until his Martyrdom

The Manner in Which People Swore Allegiance to Imam ʿAlī

During the period of his caliphate, ʿUthmān became involved in a variety of financial and administrative corruptions, which were unacceptable and illegal in the eyes of the people. He spent the money of the public treasury based on his whims and appointed unsuitable people from his tribe, the Banū Ummayyah, to government posts and positions. Many people who were suitable and deserving of government positions were brushed aside, while incompetent and undeserving people from his tribe were selected.

The handing over of the fate of the Islamic nation to such corrupt and unsuitable people aroused the anger of the masses. One particularly vexing complaint which the people had was the power of corrupt governors and government leaders. After repeated complaints and warnings to the caliph, no action was taken to remove these individuals and soothe the people's anger. As a result, open revolt broke out against him and it ended with a siege of his house and his subsequent killing.

After the revolt ended, the people gave their oath of loyalty to Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and he was selected as the caliph. Therefore, the election of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), which came about after the killing of ʿUthmān, was in reality a revolutionary government

---

al-Ḥadīth, vol. 4, p. 237.

63- Ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, al-Iṣābah Fī Tamayyūz al-Saḥābah, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 509.

- Ibn ʿAbd al-Bir, Al-Istiʿāb Fī al-Maʿrifah al-Asḥāb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā'a al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 39.

and a consequence of the people's revolt against the corruption and oppression of the previous government.

One of the examples of corruption which occurred under the government of 'Uthmān was when he brought back 'Ḥakam ibn Abī al-'Aās' and his son 'Marwān' to Medina. These were individuals who had been exiled from Medina to the city of Ṭāif by the Holy Prophet (ṣ), and neither Abū Bakr, nor 'Umar had found the courage of bringing them back during their respective caliphates. 'Uthmān even went as far as wedding his own daughter to Marwān, and gave him the responsibility of bookkeeping in the office of his caliphate. This was one of the issues which enraged the people against him.

During the last days of the revolt, 'Uthmān's house was under siege for a period of 49 days.[64] Every time 'Uthmān wished to show flexibility towards the people in terms of reforming his policies, Marwān would act in ways that would arouse the people's anger even further against him. Finally, the anger of the Muslims boiled over; they overran his house, and he was killed.

The Lofty Position of Imam 'Alī

The revolutionaries were really only focused on removing 'Uthmān as caliph. Even though the name of Imam 'Alī ('a) would come up during the days of the mutiny, they had no clear plans as to what should be done after his removal. When 'Uthmān was killed and removed from the position of the caliphate, the people were faced with the new problem of selecting a ruler.

To further complicate matters, out of the six person council which had selected 'Uthmān as caliph, two of these individuals had passed away. These six had been Imam 'Alī ('a), 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf, 'Uthmān, Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, and Sa'ad ibn Waqqāṣ; the two that had passed away were

---

[64] Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 2, p. 346.

'Uthmān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf. Among the four that were left, Imam 'Alī ('a) was the most loved, and from the perspective of virtue and past history, no one could come close to reaching his achievements and status. Due to these factors, the people were drawn to selecting him as their caliph.

Imam 'Alī ('a) studied the conditions of the Muslims and the social transformations which had taken place during 'Uthmān's caliphate. He realized that ruling after such widespread corruption and scandal would be a very complicated and difficult matter. Another issue was that the people, particularly the regional or local leaders, would not submit to his programs of reform and would not tolerate equality and justice. Due to these reasons, when the revolutionaries came to give the Imam ('a) their oath of loyalty, he refused.

All historians agree that on the 35th year of Dhī al-Ḥijjah, 'Uthmān was killed, but there are differences as to the actual day on which it took place. In taking in all of the historical reports, there was a difference of at least 4-5 days between the time 'Uthmān was killed and when people gave their oath of allegiance to Imam 'Alī ('a). In the span of these several days, people were in a state of confusion and suspense.

During the span of these several days, the leaders of the rebellion kept approaching Imam 'Alī ('a), but he did not show himself publicly. The reason behind his non-acceptance of the caliphate was that he did not see the situation to be conducive or favorable at all. He is recorded as having said:

"Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colors and which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, and faces are not discernible. You should know that if I respond to you, I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever may be said or the abuse of the slanderers. If you leave me, then I am the same as you are. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a counselor than

as chief."[65]

Still, the crowds of people came in waves and their numbers increased, along with their persistency and demands. They were tired of the past oppression and hopeful for a future of justice. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) felt responsible and he finally ended up accepting the people's oath of allegiance with great reluctance.

In several places, the Nahj al-Balāghah mentions the people's enthusiasm and persistence in seeking the oath of allegiance with Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). It says: "They leapt upon me as the camels leap upon each other on their arrival to drinking water when they have been let loose from their chains... This continued until I thought they would either kill me or kill one another in front of me. I thought over the ins and outs of this matter to the extent that it prevented me from sleeping."[66]

In another place, it describes the scene where people were crowding around Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), after his acceptance of the caliphate. It also described their level of joy and exuberance. It says: "You were dragging my hand towards you to swear the oath of allegiance, but I was withdrawing it; this struggle continued until you gathered around me in such numbers, and in such a way, as if you were thirsty camels and as if I was he only spring of water. In your eagerness, you almost rushed me; you were pushing and dragging each other to reach me, until the laces of my shoes were broken, the cloak fell off of my shoulders, and old and weak individuals were crushed. You were so overjoyed on that occasion, that even young children came out toddling, running and joyfully jumping, old people were falling down and dragging themselves to reach my feet, the ill and sick came to me staggering and creeping, and even young girls came out of their houses running towards me to show their veneration and respect. Can you deny these facts?"[67]

---

[65] Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 92.

[66] Ibid, Sermon 54.

[67] Nahj al-Balāghah, Translated by Jaʿfar ʿAskarī, Sermon 229.

In his sermon of Shiqshiqīya, the Imam has again detailed his acceptance of the caliphate and the enthusiasm of the people who thronged around him. He says: "After his death, the people flocked around me, imploring me to take up the caliphate. They gathered in such numbers and were so anxious to show their sincerity that both of my sons (Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ('a)) were almost trampled and my dress was torn. They were falling upon me to accept the position of leadership. I would have turned down their request, but I was afraid that with my refusal, they would completely lose touch of the truth and the religion.

But when I accepted their rulership, and made them follow the path of God, they revolted... All of the three groups behaved as if they have never heard the Quran saying: 'Heaven is meant for those who do not covet, do not create mischief and do not oppress human beings; the eternal peace and happiness is for those who lead a pious and holy life.'

I swear by God that they were made to hear these words of God repeatedly and their meaning was explained to them completely and fully. However, the vicious ways of ungodly life fascinated them and its luxuries, its pomp and glory, as well as its power and wealth enchanted them.

I swear by the Creator of this universe that had they not sworn unconditional allegiance to me, had they not manifested unbounded thankfulness in my accepting their rulership, had not the presence of helpers and supporters made it incumbent upon me to defend the faith, and had not God the Almighty taken a promise from the learned scholars to put a check upon the luxurious and vicious lives of oppressors and tyrants, as well as to try to reduce the pangs of poverty and the starvation of the oppressed and down-trodden... I would even now have left the rulership of this state, and would have allowed it to sink into anarchy and chaos as I did during the early days. The pomp and glory of a vicious life is worth less to me than even the sneeze of a

goat."[68]

His Engagement in the Three Battles

The caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was a government based on justice and equality. While his government greatly benefited the masses, there was a privileged class which had risen with the rule of the previous caliphs, who feared for the loss of their illegitimate power and wealth. This group began to array themselves against Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) rule. The opposition of these groups consequently resulted in three battles which are respectively named as the battles against the: Nākithīn, Qāsiṭīn, and Māriqīn. Each of them will be discussed in some detail below.

The Battle against the Nākithīn

The battle against the Nākithīn (the pledge breakers) began with two individuals named Ṭalḥah and Zubayr. These were two of the more important men who had made their oath of allegiance with Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) at the start of his caliphate. They requested to be instated as the governors of Baṣrah and Kūfah, but Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) did not accept their request. It was at this time that they secretly left Medina and departed towards Mecca, where they raised an army with money from the Ummayids (money that had been stolen from the Muslim public treasury). After raising this army, they headed towards Baṣrah and took control of the city. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) left Medina with his army, and near Baṣrah, a very severe battle erupted between the two sides in the year 36 Hijrī. Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was victorious and the Nākithīn were defeated. This battle is also popularly known as the Battle of the Camel.

The Battle against the Qāsiṭīn

Mūʿāwīya, before the election of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) as the

[68] Nahj al-Balāghah, Translated by Ja'far 'Askarī, Sermon 3.

caliph, had begun to build the prerequisites of a caliphate for himself in Syria, where he was governor. When Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) became caliph, he ordered the immediate dismissal of Mūʿāwīya and did not agree with keeping him as the governor of Syria. Mūʿāwīya refused to step down and the result of this conflict was a battle in a land called Ṣiffīn.

Due to the area in which the conflict took place, it is popularly known as the Battle of Ṣiffīn; this battle took place in the 37th year Hijrī. The army of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was leading towards a victory initially, but Mūʿāwīya used trickery which created differences and conflict within the Muslim army. After much insistence from the soldiers in his army, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was forced to agree to an arbitration process. The person selected by his soldiers ended up being Abū Mūsā Ashʿarī, and on Mūʿāwīya's side, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAās. These two were selected to consider the interests of Islam and the Muslims, and to announce their opinions in order that a solution could be found.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was firmly opposed to this arbitration process as well as the selection of Abū Mūsā as the arbitrator, but in spite of this, a great deal of pressure was placed on him to accept the arbitration process. If he had outrightly refused the process, he might have been killed by his own men and the Muslims would have been placed in an even worse political crisis. After reaching the appointed time, the arbitrators came forward and announced their decision. ʿAmr tricked Abū Mūsā in this process and implemented the arbitration to Mūʿāwīya's clear benefit.

After this arbitration, the very people who were violently clamoring for Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) to accept the arbitration process became disenchanted at its results and began to criticize him for having accepted the process!

The Battle against the Māriqīn

The Māriqīn were the same group who had forced Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) to accept the arbitration process and then, after a span

of several days, regretted their decision and began asking for its annulment from the Imam ('a). Imam 'Alī ('a) refused to break his pledge and annul the treaty which had been made just a few days before. These men, who became known as the Khawārij, then rose against him in open defiance, and the resulting battle was called the Battle of Nahrawān. This battle took place during the 38th, or according to some, 39th year Hijrī. Imam 'Alī ('a) ended up being victorious in the battle, but some of the grudges which had fueled the battle remained in the hearts of his enemies.

Imam 'Alī ('a), after ruling for 4 years and several months, was martyred by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam (one of the members of the Khawārij) during the 19th night of the holy month of Ramaḍān in the 39th year Hijrī.

The Second Imam

Imam Ḥasan

A Brief Introduction into the Life of Imam Ḥasan

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was born in the middle of the holy month of Ramaḍān during the 3rd year Hijrī, in the holy city of Medina. He was the son of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and the Lady Fāṭimah (ʿa), the daughter of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ).

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was no older than seven when the Prophet (ṣ) passed away. After the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), his father Amīr al-Muʾminīn (ʿa) lived for approximately another 30 years, until he was martyred in the year 40 Hijrī. At this point, he was selected for the divine station of the imamate and he held this position for approximately 10 years, until his martyrdom at the behest of Mūʿāwīya in the year 50 Hijrī. He died at the age of 48 and was buried in the graveyard of Baqīʿ in Medina.

The Answerer of the Deprived

According to the religion of Islam, the wealthy hold a heavy responsibility towards the poor and impoverished members of society. According to its religious precepts of brotherhood and social harmony, the wealthy must always be diligent in providing for and meeting their needs. The Prophet (ṣ), and the Imams who came after him, not only gave repeated commands in these regards but they were also themselves living examples of providing for the poor and taking care of their needs.

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) not only had a distinguished position in terms of piety, asceticism, and worship, but he was also known for his magnanimity, liberality, and giving nature towards the poor. His very presence in the Muslim society acted as a calming influence over the hearts of the impoverished and his home was a sanctuary and place of hope for them. No indigent person would leave the door of his house with empty

hands. Oftentimes, people would have their needs answered without even having to ask, because Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) would give them what they needed before they could hurt their dignity by having to ask him.

Suyūṭī has written in his book of history that: "Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī was the possessor of great morals and virtues. He was a magnanimous, forbearing, dignified, serene, generous, and giving individual and people greatly honored and praised him.[69]

An Instructive Lesson

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) would at times give large amounts of money away to the poor. These amounts, which were given away at once, were so large that they would create amazement and wonder in the people. In these instances, he would give away enough that the individuals went from poverty to self-sufficiency and were able to live a respectable life from that point onwards. The Imam (ʿa) did not see it as acceptable that a poor person was given just enough to survive for that day and then have to go begging the very next day in front of others to meet his basic needs.

The Family of Knowledge and Virtue

One day ʿUthmān was sitting next to a mosque when a poor man approached him and asked him for help. ʿUthmān gave him 5 dirhams. The poor man said: "Guide me towards someone who will give me more help." ʿUthmān pointed the man towards three individuals who were sitting in a corner of the mosque; these three were Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa), and ʿAbdullah Jaʿfar. After ʿUthmān pointed out these three men, he said to the poor man: "Go to those three men and ask your need from them."

The man went towards the three and conveyed his request.

---

[69] The History of the Caliphs, vol. 3, Baghdad, Maktabah al-Muthannā, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 189.

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) asked him: "Asking others for financial help is only correct in three situations. The first is for paying the Dīya[70] when he is unable to pay it himself. The second is a crippling debt which one has where there is no other means of paying it back. The third is a poor person who has no means of making money for himself. May I ask if one of these situations has occurred for you?" The man replied: "Actually, my problem is one of these three things." At this, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) gave the man 50 Dinars. Following his example, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) gave the man 49 dinars and ʿAbdullah ibn Jaʿfar gave the man 48 dinars.

As the man was returning, he passed by where ʿUthmān was sitting. ʿUthmān asked him: "What happened?" The man answered: "I asked you for money and you gave it to me, but you didn't ask me what the money was for. When I went to those three people, one of them asked me the reason behind my request and I answered him. Then all three of them gave me this amount of money." ʿUthmān said to the man: "This family is the center of knowledge and wisdom, and the fountainhead of goodness and virtue. Is it possible to find anyone equal to them?"[71]

Unparalleled Generosity

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) would exert all of his efforts into actions which were pleasing to God. One aspect was his giving of wealth to the poor and indigent. Historians and scholars have recorded a generosity that was exceptional and unparalleled, and showed his heedlessness towards this world's material attractions. Historians have recorded that: "During the span of his life, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) gave his whole wealth and possessions away twice in the way of God; he also split his wealth into two portions, giving away one half and keeping

---

[70] Money which is given in certain situations in compensation due to harming someone

[71] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, 1393 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 43, p. 333.

the other half in the way of God three times."[72]

His Indirect Assistance

Imam Ḥasan's ('a) generosity did not allow him to have anyone leave his house without having their needs met. Sometimes, when direct assistance was not possible, he would show the people ways to meet their needs indirectly. Through these indirect ways, he would help solve the problems which people had in their lives.

It was such a case when one day a poor man came to his door and asked for help from the Imam ('a). At that moment, the Imam ('a) did not have any money on hand, but in the face of a poor man leaving his house without having had his need met, he became embarrassed and said to the man: "Are you ready for me to guide you in an act where you will be able to meet your need?" The man asked: "What should I do?" The Imam ('a) said to him: "Today, the daughter of the caliph passed away, and he is in a state of mourning but no one has yet gone to pay their condolences to him. Go to him and tell him these words which I will teach you and offer him your condolences. In this way, you will reach your goal."

The man then asked: "How should I give him my condolences?" The Imam ('a) said to him: "When you go to the caliph, say the following to him: 'Praise be to God that when your daughter died, it was under the shadow of her father. If the caliph had passed away from the world before this, then your daughter, after your passing, would have been as one without a home to go to and might have been treated irreverently.'"

The poor man went to 'Uthmān and acted as he had been instructed. When he said these emotional words, the caliph was greatly affected, and his pain and grief lessened. He

---

72- Suyūṭī, The History of the Caliphs, vol. 3, Baghdad, Maktabah al-Muthannā, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 190.
- Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Haydarīya, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 215.

ordered that the man be rewarded. Then he asked the poor man: "Were these your words which you recited?" The poor man replied: "Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) taught them to me." The caliph said: "You speak the truth; he is the fountainhead of eloquence and sweet speech."[73]

Examining the Causes and Reasons behind the Peace Treaty of Imam Ḥasan

The most critical part of Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) life, which has also been the subject of numerous debates and speculation, is that of his peace treaty with Mūʿāwīya, and his stepping aside as caliph. Some people who have studied the life of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) have certain questions pertaining to his peace treaty with Mūʿāwīya. They ask why Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) signed a peace treaty with Mūʿāwīya when the Muslims, and more specifically his own followers, had made an oath of allegiance to the Imam (ʿa) himself? Couldn't Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) have initiated what his brother Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) initiated at an earlier time? In such a case, he either would have been victorious against Mūʿāwīya or, with his martyrdom, he would have shaken the foundations of Mūʿāwīya's rule just like Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) accomplished later on.

Before jumping into these questions, there are three crucial points which must be discussed first:

1- Imam Ḥasan's Role in the Wars before his Caliphate

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) has been recorded in history as having been a brave and courageous individual who never showed any fear in the face of danger. He was never hesitant in engaging in acts of unbelievable bravery and he was always prepared to fight in the way of God.

---

[73] Sharīf al-Qarshī, Bāqir, Ḥayāt al-Imām al-Ḥasan, Najaf, Maṭba'ah al-Ādāb, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 302.

At the Battle of the Camel

During the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) fought under the banner of his father, who was the caliph of the time. As narrated in the books of history, he showed courage and bravery in the face of the enemy. His attacks were routinely known to strike fear and terror into the hearts of the opposing army.[74]

Before the start of the battle, he was involved in going to Kūfah with ʿAmmār Yāsir and several other companions of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) in order to invite and encourage the people towards participation in the battle.[75] When he entered Kūfah, he was confronted with Abū Mūsā Ashʿarī who was the current ruler of the city and who was opposed to people joining the war effort. Abū Mūsā had been one of the supporters of ʿUthmān's rule and was opposed to Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) caliphate. In the face of Abū Mūsā and his supporter's opposition and their efforts to prevent people from joining, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was able to raise 9,000 fighters and dispatch them towards the battlefront.

In the Battle of Ṣiffīn

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had an important role in raising forces for this war, as well as dispatching them towards the warfront for battle against Mūʿāwīya. He played a crucial role in rousing the people of Kūfah with his provocative and moving speeches, and encouraged them in battle against the enemies of the Muslims.[76]

Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) devotedness and spirit of self sacrifice in the cause of Islam was so intense that Amīr al-Muʾminīn

---

[74] Ibn Shahrashūb, Manāqib Āal Abī Ṭālib, vol. 4, p. 21.

[75] -Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Haydarīya, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 170.
- Ibn Qutaybah' Daynāwarī, al-Imāmah Wa al-Sīyāsah, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 67.

[76] Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, Wāqīatu Ṣiffīn, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 113.

('a) had to ask his companions to prevent him and his brother (Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ('a)) from continuing their battle against the enemy in order that the lineage of the Prophet (ṣ) would not be ended with their deaths.

2- Imam Ḥasan's Conflict with Mū'āwīya

Imam Ḥasan ('a) never showed any weakness or compromise in defending the religion or in announcing the truth. He would openly criticize the actions of Mū'āwīya, which were in open contradiction with Islam. He would criticize Mū'āwīya and his tribe's disgraceful deeds openly, without any apprehension or fear. As evidence, it is only necessary to look at Imam Ḥasan's harsh and critical words against Mū'āwīya and his officials and supporters such as 'Amr ibn 'Aās, 'Utbah ibn Abī Sufyān, Walīd ibn 'Uqbah, Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah, and Marwān Ḥakam. [77]

Even after the settling of the peace treaty, and the subsequent strengthening of Mū'āwīya's rule and the stabilization of his power, Imam Ḥasan ('a) went to the top of a pulpit in Kūfah (this situation took place right when Mū'āwīya had entered Kūfah) and began explaining the motives behind the signing of the treaty and the merits of the family of Imam 'Alī ('a). Then, in the presence of both groups, he mentioned the weaknesses of Mū'āwīya, and began to criticize his policies and methods of rule.[78]

After the martyrdom of Imam 'Alī ('a) and the peace of Imam Ḥasan ('a), the Khawārij mobilized all of their forces against Mū'āwīya. News soon reached Mū'āwīya that Hawthara' Asadī, one of the heads of the Khawārij, had risen up against him and had mobilized an army. Mū'āwīya, in order to solidify and stabilize his rule and in order to make it seem as if Imam Ḥasan ('a) was his follower and under his control, sent him a message telling him to first quell the

---

77 Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, al-Maṭba'atu al-Murtaḍawīyah, p. 144-150.

78 Ibid, p. 156.

uprising of Hawthara and then to continue on his way to Medina.

The Imam ('a) answered his message in this manner: "I disengaged from hostilities against you for the sake of the Muslims. This does not mean that I will fight others on your behalf. If there is a call to war, before I fight against anyone else, I would first fight against you; for battle against you is more necessary than against the Khawārij."[79]

3- The Islamic Code of Law in Regards to Peace Treaties

In the Islamic canon of law, there is no singular instruction in regards to war. In certain situations, Islam has commanded the use of war to fight against its enemies, and in other situations, it has commanded that if war does not result in safety and security, then Muslims should use peaceful means to achieve safety and stability in their society.

In the history of the life of the Prophet (ṣ), both peace and war were used when appropriate. For example, in the Battles of Badr, Uḥud, Aḥzāb, and Ḥunayn, the Prophet (ṣ) used war because it was the most appropriate response for those particular scenarios. In other situations where the Prophet (ṣ) saw victory as not being possible, he made a treaty with the enemy and temporarily halted hostilities in order that Islam could progress and become stronger. His treaties with the Banī Ḍamrah, Banī Ashja', as well as the people of Mecca (in the treaty of Ḥudaybīya) are among such examples.[80]

Therefore, in the very same way that the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) temporarily made peace with certain tribes based on the

---

79 - Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1961 A.D., vol. 5, p. 98.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 409.

80 When someone objected to Imam Ḥasan's (a) peace treaty with Mū'āwīya, the Imam (a) invoked the peace treaties of the Prophet (s) and said: "For the same reason that the Prophet (s) signed a peace treaty with the tribes, I also signed a peace treaty with Mū'āwīya." Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktab al-Islāmīyah, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 44, p. 2.

greater good, likewise Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) acted in the same way and made peace for the greater good of the Muslims of that time. The reason behind Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) actions may not have been apparent to all the people who were around him during that era. From the perspective of the Shias, the Infallible Imam is selected by God and is the most capable individual of that society to determine its greater good. He is someone who is able to see a situation from various angles and positions that an ordinary person is unable to see. Based on this perspective, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) determined that the best course of action for the Muslim society of that time was in the signing of the peace treaty.

In order to better view the circumstances, after effects, and conditions of the peace treaty, it is useful for us to go forward using historical documents and references. This will allow us a deeper and clearer view of the situation.

Overall, it must be said that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) did not initiate the peace treaty; it was in fact something that was forced upon him. The conditions and situations of that time were unfavorable, and various causes acted upon each other in creating a situation where the acceptance of the peace treaty became necessary. Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) did not have any other option but to accept the treaty; any other individual would have acted in the same manner due to the prevailing circumstances. These unfavorable circumstances included the international situation of the Muslim world, the domestic situation in Iraq, as well as the military situation of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). We will review each of these issues in some detail below:

From the Perspective of Foreign Politics

From the perspective of the foreign politics of that time, a civil war would have greatly damaged the Muslim community. The Eastern Roman Empire felt threatened by the Muslims who were on their southern borders. They were waiting for an opportunity of civil war or weakness in order to strike a

decisive blow to the Muslims and finally rid themselves of their newfound neighbors.

When news of the impending battle between Mūʿāwīya and Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) reached the Roman leaders and military commanders, they realized that this was the opportunity they had been waiting for. They mobilized a large army and prepared them for a final and decisive assault on the Muslims.

Even if this event was to be viewed in isolation, it would have been enough of a reason to prevent the Imam (ʿa) from initiating what would have been a civil war between the Muslims. The existence and continuation of Islam naturally takes precedence over the details of rulership. With the acceptance of the peace treaty, the Muslims were saved from the division and subsequent destruction that the Roman Empire would have wrought. Yet it was bought at the price of the suffering of the Imams (ʿa) and their close followers.

Yaʿqūbī, the famous historian, has written: "When Mūʿāwīya returned to Syria (after the peace treaty with Imam Ḥasan (ʿa)), news reached him that the Roman Empire had raised a large and well-disciplined army, and they were en route to attacking the Muslims. Mūʿāwīya did not have the power to oppose them and so he signed a peace treaty and agreed to pay them 100,000 dinars."

These historical records show that at the initial stages of the conflict, the mutual enemy of the Muslims had prepared itself to use this opportunity for an attack and the Muslim community was exposed to a serious threat. If the war had been initiated between the forces of the two sides, then the only real victor would have been the Roman Empire. Neither Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), nor Mūʿāwīya would have been victorious and in essence, the real losers would have been the whole of the Muslim community. With Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) far sightedness and prudence, this serious danger was averted. Imam Bāqir (ʿa) gave this reply to an individual who was criticizing the peace treaty of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). He said: "If Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had not done what he did, then a great

danger would have followed."[81]

From the Perspective of Domestic Politics

If any military commander wishes to be successful in the theatre of war, then the most important factors in regards to their army is that of numbers, organization, and coordination. Without these, participation in any war is clearly going to end in defeat.

Likewise, when researching the reasons behind Imam Ḥasan's ('a) peace treaty, we find that the most obvious reason was the lack of forces and a lack of cohesiveness in the remaining few. The people of Iraq, and in particular, the people of Kūfah, did not possess the mental preparedness for battle, nor did they possess the proper organization, coordination, and unity which was so vital for a war effort.

Weariness of War

Many battles had taken place before the time of Imam Ḥasan's ('a) caliphate, such as the Battle of the Camel, the Battle of Ṣiffīn, and the Battle of Nahrawān. Alongside these, there had been other high casualty battles after the event of the 'Arbitration' between the forces of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) and Mū'āwīya in places as varied as Yemen, the Ḥijāz, and Iraq. All of these wars had combined to create a feeling of weariness towards war amongst the people and an inclination towards making peace and abandoning of hostilities. During the five years when Imam 'Alī ('a) was caliph, his followers had only put down their weapons with the intention of picking them up the next day for another battle; it was a continuous period of harsh and demoralizing war. Furthermore, these wars were not wars with foreigners; they were in fact wars against brothers, past friends, and relatives who had joined Mū'āwīya's forces. Even without considering

[81] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maṭba'at al-Islāmīya, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 44, p. 1.

the physical strain, these wars were demanding from a psychological point of view.[82]

For this reason, the people of Iraq showed sluggishness in dispatching forces against their enemies during the different conflicts which took place. There were many raiding parties which came from Syria, and who engaged in attacks against the areas of the Ḥijāz, Yemen, and Iraq. Instead of being resolute in warding off these attacks, the Iraqis showed feebleness and a willingness to compromise. Their sluggish response to the repeated call to arms of the Imam ('a) was partially due to this weariness of war.[83]

Dr. Ṭahā Ḥusayn, after narrating the events of the 'Arbitration', and how the situation had become more complicated after the Battle of Ṣiffīn, says:

"Then 'Alī ('a) decided to set out for Syria, but the hypocrites amongst his companions suggested that they return to Kūfah first and settle their individual affairs and then, with an even larger force and greater preparations, go towards the enemy. Imam 'Alī ('a) returned them to Kūfah. When they reached Kūfah, his companions became engrossed in their family affairs and became sluggish; they lost their desire for war.

This continued to such an extent that Imam 'Alī ('a) became hopeless of them. The Imam would continuously encourage them towards war, but even with his persistence, they would neither hear him, nor accept his call. This continued and reached the point where one day in his sermon, Imam 'Alī ('a) said: 'With your disobedience, you have ruined my command and things have reached the point where the

---

[82] In the Battle of the Camel nearly 30,000 people were killed (The History of Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Haydarīya, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 172); The number of casualties on both sides during the Battle of Ṣiffīn reached 110,000 individuals (Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, 1965 A.D., vol. 2, p. 393).

[83] Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Mahdī, Assessment of the Ḥusaynī (a) Revolution (Thawrat al-Ḥusayn), Translation by Mahdī Pīshvā'ī, Second Print, Qum, Tawhīd Publications, p. 197-200.

Quraysh say: The son of Abī Ṭālib is a brave man, but he does not have familiarity with war. Who has better knowledge of war than I?'"[84]

After the passing of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a), and the subsequent caliphate of Imam Ḥasan ('a), this situation grew in severity and became even more evident; when Imam Ḥasan ('a) would invite people towards war, they were incessantly sluggish in their response.

When news reached Imam Ḥasan ('a) that the army of Mū'āwīya was marching towards Kūfah, he called people to gather at the Mosque. Then he proceeded to give a sermon where he announced the approach of Mū'āwīya and exhorted the people towards war in the way of God and standing in the face of the oppressors. He reminded people of the necessity for patience, self-sacrifice, and the toleration of coming difficulties. The knowledge which Imam Ḥasan ('a) had of the people's state of mind and mentality worried him in that they would not answer his call. His worries were well-founded, as that is precisely what happened. When his rousing sermon came to an end, a dead silence ruled over the mosque and not one individual responded to his call.

This scene was so shameful that one of the courageous companions of Imam 'Alī ('a), who was present at the gathering, began to rebuke the people for their irresolution and apathy. He called them out for being false 'warriors' who were easily frightened and lacked in courage. Then he called on them to be real men and to get ready for war against Syria.

These historical records clearly show the people's inclination towards apathy and irresolution. The warrior's spirit, which had been alive in previous Muslim armies, had been extinguished in them and they were not prepared to participate in war against Mū'āwīya.

At this point, more speeches were made by the companions of Imam Ḥasan ('a) to encourage the people and a small army

---

[84] The Religion of Islam, Translation by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Āyatī Bīrjandī, Tehran, Sherkate Sahāmī Intishār, 1339 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 250-251.

was raised. This army left Kūfah and made camp a short distance away from the city in an area called 'Nūkhaylah'. They encamped there for 10 days waiting on further forces, but in the end only 4,000 individuals could be counted in the whole of the army. The Imam ('a) was forced to return to Kūfah in order to gather more forces.[85]

A Disunited Society

In addition to the problems mentioned above, the population of Iraq was not an organized, cohesive, and unified whole. It was effectively divided into distinct and often opposing groups, which had little coordination or harmony with one another.

Among these diverse blocs, there existed many different groups with independent agendas and goals. There were the supporters of the Ummayads, the Khawārij (who were enemies of both Imam 'Alī ('a) and Mū'āwīya), non-Arab Muslims (who were not native Iraqis and numbered approximately 20,000), as well as individuals who had no set political ideology but supported one group or the other. The Shias and followers of Imam 'Alī ('a) formed another segment of this diverse populace.[86]

A Discordant Army

Naturally, this diversity of backgrounds and ideologies resulted in discord and conflict in the ranks of Imam Ḥasan's ('a) army. With such high levels of dissonance in the ranks, it was not possible for Imam Ḥasan ('a) to rely on his army, especially given the dangerous and critical position he was in. Coordination and obedience were critical to success in what was to come.

Shaykh Mufīd, alongside other historians, has written on

---

[85] Āali Yāsīn, Shaykh Rāḍī, Ṣulḥ al-Ḥasan, Manshūrāt Dār al-Kutub al-Irāqīyah Fī Kaẓimīyah, p. 102.

[86] Āali Yāsīn, Shaykh Rāḍī, The Peace of Ḥusayn (a), Manshūrāt Dār al-Kutub al-Irāqīyah Fī Kaẓimīyah, p. 102.

the dangerous situation of the Imam's army. He says: "The Iraqis prepared for war unenthusiastically and with much stalling. When they had finally prepared themselves, they were composed of very diverse segments of the society, consisting of the following factions:

1- The Shias and followers of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa)

2- The Khawārij (they were willing to use any means to fight against Mūʿāwīya. Their participation in the war was not due to their love of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), but for their hatred of Mūʿāwīya.)

3- A group with materialistic inclinations who were there only to reap worldly benefit and gain.

4- An unsure and wavering group who were uncertain whether Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was better to follow or Mūʿāwīya.

5- The last group consisted of people who did not fight for the sake of religion, but who fought for the sake of tribalism and for the honor and primacy of their group. They had only joined the war because their tribal leader had joined and so they had become obligated to do so as well."

Therefore, it is apparent that the army of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was lacking in the harmony and unity which was so vital in facing a powerful enemy such as Mūʿāwīya.

A Self Evident Proof

The most telling document during this time period which shows the Iraqi peoples disunity and division, as well as their sluggishness in preparing for war, comes in Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) own words. At the city of Madā'in, which was the furthest point his army had progressed to in the war, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) delivered a comprehensive and thought provoking speech. He said:

"No doubt will prevent us from confronting the people of Syria. In the past, with your perseverance and understanding, we have fought against these people. Unfortunately today, due to the rancor in your hearts, you have lost your unity and mutual understanding which you possessed previously. You

have lost your firmness and your tongues have inclined towards complaining.

When you departed for the war of Ṣiffīn, you had given precedence to your religion over your material benefits. But today, you have given your material benefits precedence over your religion. We are today as we were in the past, but you are not faithful towards us as you had previously been. Some of you lost members of your family in the War of Ṣiffīn and others of you lost them in the War of Nahrawān. The first group cries over the people they lost and the second group asks for the blood money. As for the rest, they balk at following us.

Mūʿāwīya has given us a suggestion that is far from being equitable and is against our lofty goals and below our dignity. So if you are ready to die in the way of God, then say so, so that we can oppose and fight against him and give him his reply with our swords. And if you are after this life and your own welfare, then likewise announce this, so that we can accept his suggestion and secure your consent.

When the words of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) reached this poin people from all sides began to shout: We want life, we want t remain alive!"[87] With an army so demoralized and lacking in warrior spirit, it was impossible for Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) to oppose and defeat Mūʿāwīya's forces. In fact, an army in this condition is not only unable to fight a war, but it is a danger to itself as well.

If Mūʿāwīya and Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had switched roles, and Mūʿāwīya had been left as the head of such an army, then it is certain that he would have made the same choices which the Imam (ʿa) made. It was the best option available in the given situation.

These circumstances, which were playing in the background, set a series of events into motion which we will

---

[87] Ibn Athīr, Asad al-Qābah Fī Marifat al-al-Saḥābah, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, vol. 2, p. 13 and 14.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 405.

go into in the following pages.

Imam Ḥasan ('a) and the Mobilization of Forces

Some writers and historians, both in the past as well as in modern times, have distorted the realities of history and they have claimed that Imam Ḥasan ('a) never really wanted to fight against Mū'āwīya. They say that from the very first day he was only interested in securing financial gain and benefit from his opponent. They claim that he was only interested in an easy life and his opposition with Mū'āwīya was a ploy for gaining these material and financial benefits.

Historical records are much like live witnesses, and they show that these slanders are without basis. If Imam Ḥasan ('a) had not wished to fight against Mū'āwīya, then he would not have made such a great effort in raising a large army. Historical records clearly show that tremendous sacrifices were made in securing an army. This was not a one-time effort, but it was something which was repeated over and over again. After Imam Ḥasan ('a) raised this army, he then prepared for battle. Unfortunately, before meeting Mū'āwīya in battle, the army became dispersed due to their lack of coordination and harmony, as well as due to some of Mū'āwīya's plots, which affected some segments of the army. In the end, the Imam's army was totally torn apart and virtually disbanded. This occurred even before the commencement of armed struggle between the two sides. Due to this turn of events, Imam Ḥasan ('a) was forced to accept the peace treaty.

In summary, Imam Ḥasan's ('a) movement began with armed struggle but, after a thorough weighing and study of the situation, and of the condition of the people during that time, it was transformed into a type of long term cold war with the acceptance of the peace treaty.[88]

---

[88] For this same reason, several of the historians have written books under the title 'The Uprising of Ḥasan (a)'. Several of these are referenced below:

A- Qiyām al-Ḥasan, Hishām ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī.

B- Qiyām al-Ḥasan, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī, (Ḥakīmī, Muḥammad

The People Who Broke Their Pledge

As mentioned previously, the people of Iraq, and in particular Kūfah, were not of one ideology or group. This went so far that they were not even willing to work with one another in basic matters of common interest. They were fickle, disloyal, and completely untrustworthy. Furthermore, they followed whoever held the reins of power and were willing to change their loyalties very quickly.

As the flames of war were being stoked, and the armies were mobilizing, a group of tribal leaders betrayed Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and began to write letters to Mūʿāwīya. At this critical juncture in the war, they wrote to him saying that they were on his side and expressed their support for him. They secretly encouraged him to march on Iraq and guaranteed that as soon as he came near, they would either seize Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and hand him over to Mūʿāwīya, or they would assassinate him.

Mūʿāwīya took these letters which had been sent to him, and forwarded them to Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). He asked how he was prepared to fight against him with such people as his supporters.[89]

Treacherous Commanders

After leaving the city of Kūfah for war against Mūʿāwīya, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) gave ʿUbaydullah ibn ʿAbbās the command of 12,000 men who were to constitute the advance guard of his army. He also appointed Qays ibn Saʿad and Saʿīd ibn Qays (who had both been longtime supporters of his family) as successors for ʿUbaydullah. In case anything happened to the first commander, these two men would be in line to

---

Riḍā, The Imam in the Likeness of the Society, Tehran, The Office of Islamic Cultural Publications, p. 171.

[89] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 191. When one of the Shias asked Imam Ḥasan (a) why he had not pushed forward in the war against Mūʿāwīya, the Imam (a) replied: "I swear by God that if I had gone to war with Mūʿāwīya, my own forces would have given me over to him." (Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, vol. 44, p. 20).

succeed his position.[90]

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) set the route of his army and ordered that whenever they made contact with Mūʿāwīya's army, they were to check his army's movement and report the situation back to him so that he could connect his main army to theirs without delay.

ʿUbaydullah moved his division until he reached an area called 'Maskin'. There, he came face to face with Mūʿāwīya's army and the two forces encamped opposite to one another. Not much time had passed when news reached Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) that ʿUbaydullah, for the price of one million dirhams, had defected to Mūʿāwīya's side. Alongside his own treachery, he had also taken 8,000 of the men under his command with him.

This treacherous act, at that critical juncture in the war, weakened the morale of Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) army and hampered its military effectiveness considerably. Mūʿāwīya also tried to bribe Qays in order to bring him over to his side but Qays, who was a long time friend of Amīr al-Mu'minīn's (ʿa) family, refused. He took control of the remainder of the army, delivered rousing speeches to improve their morale, and stood steadfast against Mūʿāwīya.[91]

The Plots of Traitors

Mūʿāwīya did not end his machinations with the bribing of ʿUbaydullah. Using his spies and agents who had established themselves in the army of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), he began a systematic campaign of rumors and slander. He spread the rumor that Qays ibn Saʿad (who was now the primary commander of the army) had made a secret deal with Mūʿāwīya. Simultaneously, he spread the rumor in Qays'

[90] Yaʿqūbī has not named Saʿīd ibn Qays, but other historians have mentioned his name in the same order.

[91] Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfihānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibīīn, Najaf Ashraf, Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Ḥaydarīa, 1375 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 42.

- Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Haydarīya, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 204.

army that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had made a peace treaty with Mūʿāwīya.

Things reached the point where Mūʿāwīya sent in a few individuals who were considered by the people to be trustworthy, to Imam Ḥasan's camp (ʿa). At his military camp in Madā'in, they held some talks with him and then after exiting his tent, they began to spread rumors amongst the soldiers and said: "God, through means of the children of the Prophet, has quelled the sedition and quenched the fires of war. Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) has made peace with Mūʿāwīya, and has safeguarded the blood of the people."

The people in the army trusted this group and so they did not bother investigating what they had said; they considered their speech as being truthful. They rioted against the Imam (ʿa), attacked his tent, and plundered it. They even intended to kill him but after a time they dispersed.[92]

The Khawārij

After this series of events, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) departed from Madā'in and went towards the city of Sābāṭ. Along the way one of the members of the Khawārij, who had been laying in ambush, attacked the Imam (ʿa) and wounded him severely. The Imam (ʿa) began to bleed profusely and his physical condition deteriorated; his companions quickly took him back to Madā'in. When he reached Madā'in, his situation became even more critical. Mūʿāwīya used this situation to his advantage and attempted to increase his control over the overall situation. Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), with no standing army at his command, was left without any real options but to accept the offer of a peace treaty.

Here, it is interesting to note that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa)

---

[92] As mentioned previously, the army of Imam Ḥasan (a) was composed of members of the Khawārij, as well as people who were seeking only material benefit from the war. It isn't that surprising to hear that at one point, they had the intention of killing Imam Ḥasan (a) and that they attacked his tent and plundered whatever they found in it. While his tent was being plundered, some of the men began to shout: This man has sold us to Mūʿāwīya and has abased the Muslims!

accepted the peace treaty only after he was completely out of any other options. Ṭabarī, as well as other historians, have written that: "Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) only became ready to accept the peace treaty when all of his followers had been dispersed and he had been left alone."[93]

Imam Ḥasan's Explanation behind the Acceptance of the Peace Treaty

Some time after the formation of the peace treaty, it has been narrated that an individual protested against what the Imam (ʿa) had done. The Imam (ʿa) answered him with the following words:

"The reason I gave the government and rulership over to Mūʿāwīya was because I had no companions and helpers left to support me in my fight against him. If I had had supporters, then I would have fought against him night and day until things had been settled. I know the Kufans quite well and I have tested them countless numbers of times. They are a corrupt people who will not be reformed. They are not loyal, nor bound by their pledges and commitments. No two of them will ever agree with one another. Outwardly, they seem to show obedience and fondness towards us, but in practice, they are with our enemies."[94]

In another instance, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), who was severely disappointed with the sluggishness and lack of cooperation of his companions, delivered this sermon: "I am in a state of astonishment from a people who have neither religion, nor shame or modesty. Woe upon you! Mūʿāwīya will not abide by the terms of the treaty in which he has promised you that

---

93 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, p. 92.
- Ibn Athīr, Asad al-Qābah Fī Marifah al-al-Saḥābah, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, vol. 2, p. 14.

94 Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, 1393 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 44, p. 147.
- Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, al-Maṭbaʿat al-Murtaḍawiyyah, p. 157.

he will not kill me. If I give the pledge of allegiance to Mūʿāwīya, then I will be able to complete my personal obligations better than I am able to right now. However, if things were to fall into Mūʿāwīya's hands, then he will not let me enact the religion of my grandfather (ṣ) in the society.

I swear by God that if I am forced unwillingly (because of your sluggishness and disloyalty) to give over the government of the Muslims to Mūʿāwīya, then have certainty that under the flag of Banī Ummayah you will never see happiness and joy. You will become entangled in various difficulties and troubles.

Right now, it is as if I see that tomorrow your children are standing in front of their children's doors and are asking for bread and water; a bread and water which is their right and which God has apportioned for them, yet the Ummayids have taken it and have deprived them of their own rights." Then the Imam (ʿa) added: "If I had supporters who would aid me in the war against the enemies of God, then I would never give the government over to Mūʿāwīya, for this government is unlawful for the Ummayids."[95]

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) clearly understood the corrupt nature of the government of Mūʿāwīya. One day he delivered a speech in a gathering in which Mūʿāwīya was also present. He said. "I swear by God that until the time the government of the Muslims is in the hands of the Ummayids, the Muslims will never be able to live in comfort and ease."[96]

This was the warning which Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) delivered to the Iraqis. The Iraqis assumed that by not fighting against Mūʿāwīya, they would be able to live in ease and comfort. This proved to be incorrect however, and the prediction of the Imam (ʿa) came strikingly true.

---

[95] Shubbar, Sayyid 'Abdullah, Jalā al-'Uyūn, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, vol. 1, p. 345-346.

[96] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1961 A.D. vol. 16, p. 38.

The Peace Treaty and the Goals of Imam Ḥasan

As mentioned previously, when Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was faced with the unfavorable conditions of his army and the society at large, he was forced to accept the peace treaty with Mūʿāwīya. He judged the peace treaty to be the best means for the protection of the Muslim community, and through use of the peace treaty, he attempted to enact his divinely guided goals as much as the situation would permit.

On the other hand, in order to take power, Mūʿāwīya was willing to sign over all sorts of stipulations on the peace treaty. He even went as far as to send a blank piece of paper with his signature to Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and said that whatever he writes would be accepted by him.[97] Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) took advantage of this and included important and sensitive matters into the text of the peace treaty. After including these critical matters into the contract, he had Mūʿāwīya take an oath to abide by them.

In the books of history, the articles of the peace treaty have not been mentioned in one complete source or in chronological order, and various historians have each cited ections of the whole treaty. Yet, by using these various ources, it is possible to piece together the whole of the treaty. 3y looking over these conditions, we can gain a sense of the extraordinary political wisdom and foresight which Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) possessed.

Before going into greater detail on these stipulations, we will first list the five main articles of the treaty below:

The Text of the Treaty

First Article: Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī will turn over the rulership and

---

97 Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 405.
- Ibn ʿAbd al-Bir, Al-Istiʿāb Fī al-Maʿrifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā'a al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 371.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 93.

government to Mūʿāwīya, conditional on Mūʿāwīya ruling based on the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣ).
Second Article: After Mūʿāwīya, the caliphate will return back to Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī and in the case that something has happened to him, then Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) will take over the caliphate of the Muslims. Mūʿāwīya does not have the right to select anyone as his successor.
Third Article: The innovation of cursing and disrespecting Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī must be halted and he must not be cursed during the prayers. Nothing but good should be mentioned about him.
Fourth Article: The five million dirhams, which is in the public treasury, must be spent under the guidance of Imam Ḥasan. In assigning stipends and money, Mūʿāwīya must prefer the Banī Hāshim over the Banī Ummayah. Also, out of the revenue of 'Dār Ibgard', Mūʿāwīya must give one million dirhams to the families of the martyrs of the War of the Camel and the War of Ṣiffīn, who were killed while fighting on the side of Amīr al-Muʾminīn. This money is to be divided amongst them.[98]
Fifth Article: Mūʿāwīya promises that people, wherever they are from, whether they are from Syria, Iraq, or the Ḥijāz, will be in safety from any persecution or harassment. If any people have been active against him in the past, then he must overlook it and not engage against them or harass them in any way. In particular, he must not harass the people of Iraq for their previous rancor against him.

In addition to this, Mūʿāwīya will give a promise of safety

[98] Dār Ibgard was one of the five cities of the Fars Province of Persia in times past. (Deh Khūdā Dictionary, Word: Dār Ibgard). The reason behind this stipulation may have been that this city surrendered without fighting against the Muslims and signed a peace treaty with them. According to Islamic law, the taxes from this city belonged to the Prophet (s) and his family (a), along with the orphans and the indigent. Due to this situation, Imam Ḥasan (a) stipulated the condition that the revenue from this city be given to the families of the martyrs of the War of the Camel and the War of Ṣiffīn. As mentioned previously, the money belonged to Imam Ḥasan (a). In addition, the poor families of the martyrs of these two wars were included in another category of Islamic law in which the revenue money was due. (Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1393 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 44, p. 10.

to all of the companions of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), wherever they may be. He may not harass them, and their lives, wealth, and honor are all protected. They may not be pursued or harassed by any means, nor should they be bothered in the least. The rights of each person should be given to them, and any wealth from the public treasury, which is in the hands of the followers (shias) of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) should not be taken from them.

Mūʿāwīya should not expose Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) or his brother, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa), to any danger, and none of the members of the Prophet's household should at any time be terrorized or frightened by him. At the conclusion of the peace treaty, Mūʿāwīya swore an oath to uphold all of its points and to act upon them exactly as written. He held God as his witness in this matter and all of the notables of Syria bore witness to it.[99]

When Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was only a child, the Prophet (ṣ) foretold of the event of the peace treaty when he said: "This child of mine is the master of the Muslims, and God, through him, will establish a truce between two groups of the Muslims."[100]

The Goals of Imam Ḥasan in the Peace Treaty with Mūʿāwīya

Whenever rulers and leaders from around the world see themselves on a path that is contrary to their goals, they attempt to chart a course in which the least possible harm will affect them and in which they will gain the most benefit. This is a very basic principle in political and social maneuvering.

---

[99] For the details of this peace treaty please refer to the book 'The Peace of Ḥasan (a)', By: Shaykh Rāḍī Âali Yāsīn (Manshūrāt al-Dār al-Kītāb al-'Irāqīya Fī al-Kāẓimiyya) p. 259-261.

[100] This foretelling, with small differences in wording, have been narrated in the sources below: Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkīrat al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭbaʿah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 194; Asad al-Qābah, vol. 2, p. 12; Nūr al-Abṣār, p. 121; al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah, Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī, p. 158; al-Iṣābah, vol. 1, p. 330; Kashf al-Ghammah, Farsi Translation, vol. 2, p. 98; Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, vol. 2, p. 298; al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Maḥraqah, p. 82; Ḥafiẓ Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah Wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah al-Maʿārif, 1394 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 8, p. 36...

Based on these basic principles, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was striving hard in order to reach his goals through the means available to him. Therefore, when he became forced to reach a compromise with Mūʿāwīya, he gave the government to Mūʿāwīya based on the stipulations of the first article. This was that Mūʿāwīya would rule based on the principles of the Holy Quran and the methods of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) primary motivation in this was the preservation of the religion of Islam and the preservation of the society through the enactment of Islamic law. Therefore, by adding this stipulation, he reached some of his primary objectives.

In addition, according to the second article, Imam Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) would become the caliph of the Muslims after the death of Mūʿāwīya. Mūʿāwīya, at the time of the treaty, was about 30 years older than Imam Ḥasan (ʿa).[101] It was not unexpected that he would pass away after a short time, and with this stipulation in the peace treaty, things were weighted in favor of the Muslims and the Islamic society.

The rest of the points also have strong foundational supports; the situation of those times was in such a way that Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was cursed, disrespected, and slandered at every occasion possible. This action had become a sort of innovation in the religious practices of the society. Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) family, as well as his followers, were pursued everywhere they went and they were under the constant threat of imprisonment, torture, and death. Taking an oath from Mūʿāwīya to abstain from these actions was definitely a positive step. Even if Mūʿāwīya ended up breaking the pledge, the proof of his written oath was left as a weight against him in the eyes of the people.

A Gathering in Kūfah

After the peace treaty was concluded, both sides entered Kūfah along with their supporters, and gathered at the city's

[101] Āali Yāsīn, Ibid, p. 278.

main mosque. People also gathered there in the expectation that the leaders of the two sides would give speeches where the peace treaty would be discussed, and through this, no room would be left for doubts or ambiguities.

After the people had gathered, Mūʿāwīya came forward and sat on the pulpit of the mosque and began to deliver a speech. During the course of this speech, he did not mention the stipulations of the treaty, and even went as far as to mock them. He said:

"I did not fight against you for the sake of prayer, your completion of the Ḥajj, or the paying of the poor rate. This is because I know that you do all of these things. I have fought against you so that I could make you obedient to me and rule over you." Then he added: "Know that whatever conditions and treaty I agreed to with Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa), I have put them underneath my feet and they have no value whatsoever."[102]

In this manner, Mūʿāwīya openly nullified all of the promises he had made and the oaths which he had sworn, and canceled the whole of the peace treaty. This became the first step towards the awakening of the people to the realities of the Ummayid government. From this point onwards, things were about to get much worse for the Muslim community.

The Crimes of Mūʿāwīya

After announcing his nullification of the treaty, Mūʿāwīya went on to increase the severity and number of his crimes. He made the custom of cursing Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) even more widespread in the society until it was felt to be a part of the religion itself. He also increased the pressure on the Shias and the companions of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) until it had reached unbearable proportions. He made the killing and torture of the companions of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) very common, until it was

---

[102] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1961 A.D. vol. 16, p. 15.
- Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfihānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibīīn, Najaf Ashraf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabat al-Ḥaydarīa, 1375 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 45.

considered normal for them to either be in jail, undergoing torture, or having been exiled into far off lands. He went as far as murdering some of the most eminent Muslim personalities, amongst them Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī.

Mūʿāwīya also did not act as he had promised in regards to the revenue of 'Dār Ibgard'. Ṭabarī has narrated that: "The people of Baṣrah did not give their revenue of Dār Ibgard and said that this money belongs to the public treasury and is for us."[103] Ibn Athīr has written: "The people of Baṣrah refused to pay their revenue from Dār Ibgard and they did this under orders of Mūʿāwīya."[104]

The Awakening and Rising Awareness of the People

It was necessary for the same people who had been tired and disinclined towards war with Mūʿāwīya and had forced the subsequent peace treaty, to be awakened from their sleep and realize what the rule of Mūʿāwīya actually meant for them. It was necessary for these people to realize their mistake, in order for them to be roused into fixing it. This was not possible until they had seen with their very own eyes, the repercussions of allowing Mūʿāwīya to gain power.

In addition, it was necessary for the Muslims to practicall see the true face of the Umayyid government and to become familiar with its ensuing pressures, deprivations, and scare tactics.

What was necessary for Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and his companions during this time was to reveal these realities and prepare the people's minds to reflect upon, understand, and then oppose their enemy's corrupt way of rule. Imam Ḥasan

---

[103] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bī Tā) vol. 6, p. 95.

[104] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 405. Balādhūrī has written: "Mūʿāwīya gave orders to his governor in Baṣrah that he instigate the people against Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (a). He obeyed this order and in conclusion of the instigations, the people of Baṣrah began to say: This money belongs to the public treasury; why should we give this money to others?" (Insāb al-Ashrāf, Researched by: Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Maḥmūdī, Beirut, Dār al-Taʿāruf Lil Maṭbūʿāt, 1397 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 47).

('a) did not accept the peace treaty in order to shirk his responsibility in leading the Muslims. He did so in order to begin another type of war against Mū'āwīya. What ended up taking place after the conclusion of the peace treaty pushed the society in this direction and helped the Iraqis to see the true reality.

Ṭabarī has written: "Mū'āwīya, after the cease fire, encamped at a place called Nukhaylah (which is near Kūfah). At this time, a group of the Khawārij rose against him and entered into the city of Kūfah. Mū'āwīya sent one military column of the Syrians against them, but the Khawārij defeated them. Seeing this, Mū'āwīya ordered the people of Kūfah to rise up and defeat them, and threatened that if they did not do so, their lives and properties would not be safe (from his government)."[105]

Just like this, the same people of Iraq who were not ready to fight under the banner of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) and Imam Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ('a) were forced by Mū'āwīya to fight against the Khawārij. The irony behind this was that Mū'āwīya was the joint enemy of both the people of Iraq, as well as the Khawārij; now they were being forced to fight against each other. At this juncture it was proven that the peace and tranquility which the people sought, and for which they had refused to fight against Mū'āwīya, proved elusive to them once more.

Mū'āwīya's Policy of Fear and Hunger

In addition to what was mentioned above, Mū'āwīya enacted a policy of fear and hunger on the people of Iraq. They were deprived of their possessions and put under a number of severe restrictions. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, the famous Sunni scholar, has written: "Wherever Shias were found, they were killed. If anyone was suspected of being a Shia, their

[105] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bee, Taa), vol. 6, p. 95.

hands and feet were cut off. Whoever was known for their love and connection to the family of the Prophet (ʿa) was either imprisoned, his wealth seized, or his house demolished."

The severity of the pressure reached a point where being accused of friendship with Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), was considered worse in the society than Kufr (disbelief in God) or irreligiousness; it also entailed harsher judicial punishments. In the enactment of this policy of terror and widespread fear, Kūfah was the hardest hit, for it was counted as the center of the Shias of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ʿa).

Mūʿāwīya appointed Zīyād ibn Summayyah as the governor of Kūfah, and later turned over the governorship of Baṣrah to him as well. Zīyād was an individual who had at one point been one of the companions of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Due to his background, he knew the Shias well and used this knowledge to pursue and kill them. The ones who were not killed were either threatened, had their hands and feet cut off, blinded, crucified on palm trees, or they were exiled from Iraq. This continued until not a single one of the famous Shia personalities could be found in Iraq.

The Peak of Pressure in Kūfah and Baṣrah

As mentioned before, the people of Kūfah were singled out for punishment and harassment by the government of Mūʿāwīya. This had gone to such an extent that whenever people would go to the houses of their friends and wished to speak privately to them, they would not do so until they had secured repeated oaths from the servants of the house that they would not turn them in to the authorities.

In the midst of all this, Mūʿāwīya sent a directive to all of his agents and officials throughout the country that they should not accept the judicial testimony of the Shias or the family of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). In another directive, Mūʿāwīya wrote: "If two people give witness that an individual is one of the friends of ʿAlī (ʿa) or of his family, then remove his name from the registry of the public treasury and cut off his pension

and stipends."[106]

Zīyād, who alternated between ruling in Kūfah for 6 months and Baṣrah for 6 months, appointed Samūrah ibn Jundub to administer the city of Baṣrah in his absence. During the time that Samūrah was in charge, he killed 8,000 people. Zīyād later asked him: "Don't you have any apprehension that among the people you killed, one of them may have been innocent?" Samūrah replied: "Even if I had killed twice the amount, I would not have been concerned about such a thing."

Abū Sawār ʿAdawī has said: "During the morning of one day, Samūrah killed 47 members of my family who had the Quran memorized by heart."[107]

The Peace Treaty was the Foundation of the Revolution of ʿĀshūrā

These frightening turn of events showed the true nature of Mūʿāwīya's government. They shook the people of Iraq and brought them out of their state of sluggishness. They realized that their complacency had put them in a very dangerous position

During this time, it is true that the tribal chiefs were benefiting from their position of cooperation with Mūʿāwīya, but when it came to the masses, they were feeling the full brunt of Mūʿāwīya's oppression and deprivation. Quickly, the true nature of his rule became evident to them, and they realized their mistake in strengthening the Umayyid rule through their disinclination in fighting against them.[108]

---

[106] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1961 A.D. vol. 1, p. 43-45.

[107] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 132.

[108] Imam Ḥasan (a) had already predicted these turn of events. He knew well that if the government fell into the hands of the Ummayids, it would be the beginning of a dark period for the Muslims and specifically for the Shias. Unfortunately, until the Muslims had faced these bitter realities themselves, they would not be awakened. When they came face to face with these issues, they realized for the first time what an opportunity they had lost and how they had prepared the grounds for their own wretchedness and abasement.

Mū'āwīya appointed Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah as the ruler of Kūfah and gave Baṣrah over to 'Abdullah ibn 'Āmir (who had left the city after the killing of 'Uthmān and now returned in order to rule). Mū'āwīya returned to Syria and managed the apparatus of government from the city of Damascus.

Whenever the people of Iraq remembered their lives under the rule of Imam 'Alī ('a), they would feel pangs of regret. When they remembered their lack of cooperation and sluggishness in helping him, they felt deep remorse. They were hard hit by the fact that they had forced the peace treaty by their collective actions. Whenever they would meet each other, they would rebuke one another and ask what the future held for them and what they should do. Not even a few years had passed before the representatives of Kūfah began going back and forth to Medina and meeting with Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ('a).[109]

Therefore, this period of the peace treaty, was in reality a period of gradual preparation and practice for the Muslim community, in order to prepare for war against the corrup Umayyid government. It was a time of preparation an mobilization, until the time became ripe for a full-fledged revolution.

Overtures of Revolution

During the period when Imam Ḥasan ('a) concluded the peace treaty, the masses did not have the proper foundations for understanding the reality of their situation, nor did they

---

Imam Ḥasan (a), as we mentioned previously, foretold of these dark and bitter events, which were about to unfold. He said: "I swear by God that if I am forced unwillingly (because of your sluggishness and disloyalty) to give over the government of the Muslims to Mū'āwīya, then have certainty that under the flag of Banī Umayyah you will never see happiness and joy. You will become subject to a variety of torments and tortures.... Right now, it is as if I see that tomorrow your children are standing in front of their children's doors and are asking them for bread and water; a bread and water which is their right and which God has apportioned for them, yet the Banī Umayyah has taken it and deprived them of their own rights."

[109] Ḥusayn, Ṭahā, 'Alī and his Two Noble Sons, Translation by: Aḥmad Ārām, The publication house and bookstore of 'Alī Akbar 'Alamī, 1332 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 207.

have the proper foresight to support the actions of the Imam ('a). In those days the Muslim society was imprisoned by their selfish desires and worldly aspirations.

Imam Ḥasan ('a) was working to prepare the masses to rise against the Umayyid government, and to give the people sufficient time until they themselves could see the true nature of the situation which they had placed themselves in. The people had to be awakened to the oppression and crimes of the government and its act of overstepping the bounds of Islam.[110]

Bit by bit, this reality began to ingrain itself into the consciousness of the people, as well as in that of the notable members of the Iraqi society. When it reached a certain point, they asked Imam Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ('a) to rise up against the Umayyids.[111]

Reaction in Medina

After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥasan ('a), it was Imam Ḥusayn ('a) who succeeded the imamate and became the third leader of the Shias. It was during this time that news of Mū'āwīya's crimes began spreading amongst the people of Medina. Many discussions began to take place between Imam Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ('a) and the notables of Kūfah. At the time when Mū'āwīya killed Ḥujr ibn 'Adī and his companions, a group of the Kufan notables came to Imam Ḥusayn ('a) and conveyed the news. When word spread about what had happened, a wave of hatred and disgust spread amongst the Muslims.

During this time, there was a small but organized anti-

[110] From this angle, it can be said that the peace treaty was like a double edged sword for Mū'āwīya. If he accepted the terms of the peace treaty and abided by them, then this would not be to his benefit. Likewise, if he nullified the peace treaty, this would cause disenchantment and create the grounds for the people's revolt against the Umayyid government. This was a matter which Imam Ḥasan (a) had kept in mind when forming the stipulations in the treaty.

[111] However, Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (a) advised them to follow Imam Ḥasan (a) and said: "The current situation is unfavorable for an uprising; until the time that Mū'āwīya is alive, an uprising will not bear any fruit."

government movement against the Umayyids. This movement was spearheaded and pushed forward by a contingent of the more dedicated followers of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), who had been saved from death by his farsightedness during the initial campaign against Mūʿāwīya. The aim of this group was to prepare the groundwork for revolution by broadcasting the news of Mūʿāwīya's crimes, until the hearts of the people had become ready, and the proper time had come for a full on rebellion.[112]

Why did Imam Ḥasan choose peace, while Imam Ḥusayn chose Rebellion?

In the previous discussion, the mystery around the peace treaty of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was cleared up, but one question still remains that deserves discussion. This question is why Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) choose peace, while his brother Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) chose to rise up? If peace was the correct method why didn't Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) do the same thing? Likewise, i war was the correct method, then why did Imam Ḥasan (ʿa, not choose war?

The answer to these questions lies in the respective social conditions over which these two Imams (ʿa) presided, as well as in the differing actions and personal characteristics of Mūʿāwīya in comparison to his son Yazīd. Below we will explore certain aspects of these differences.

The Deception of Mūʿāwīya

During his period of rule, Mūʿāwīya was always attempting to give his government an Islamic aura and appearance. He would do this in order to make the masses believe in the Islamic legitimacy of his rule and to prevent

[112]Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Mahdī, Assessment of the Ḥusaynī (a) Revolution (Thawrat al-Ḥusayn), Translation by Mahdī Pīshvā'ī, Second Print, Qum, Tawhīd Publications, 1362 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 178-179.

them from seeing that he had departed from the ways of Islam. In reality, Mūʿāwīya had distorted Islam for his own benefit and had established a monarchical system of governance in place of the simple and pure concept of the Islamic caliphate. He had changed the Islamic society into an un-Islamic one.

In spite of his corruption, he protected the outer image of Islam and outwardly abided by some of the laws of the religion. In a manner of speaking, he was careful not to allow people to see what was behind the curtain. He understood that since he had gained the caliphate under the guise of religion, and he ruled over people in its name, he shouldn't openly commit actions which people would construe as opposition or even war against religion. His power was derived from his religious legitimacy; if he were to lose this, then his rule would be weakened significantly or even completely destroyed. Publicly, he was careful to act religiously, and if he wished to do things that he could not justify as Islamic, he was careful to do them in private. In addition to this, Mūʿāwīya also had n exceptional skill at political and social management. He was able to solve problems in very specific ways, and this was a skill which his son Yazīd would later prove to not possess.

It were these two main points which made the success of an uprising during Mūʿāwīya's time a subject of doubt. In addition, the masses had not fully developed the proper mentality for discerning the corruption of the Umayyid government. Due to this issue, an uprising and the consequent martyrdom of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) would not have provoked as much of a response as it did in the case of Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) martyrdom. In the case of an uprising by Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) during this time, it was probable that the masses would have judged it to be a case of political rivalry, and a fight over power and the right of rule, rather than viewing it as a fight of truth and justice against falsehood and tyranny. Morevover, such an uprising may have been distorted into hurting the rising tide of the movement against Mūʿāwīya's government.

An Unfavorable Atmosphere

As mentioned previously, the political climate during the time of Mūʿāwīya was not one in which a reformer could enact his policies properly, nor was it one where the people would follow and support him. It was a dangerous atmosphere in which a reformer had to watch the actions of his opponents and carefully craft an appropriate response, in view of his own resources and opportunities. This was the main problem during Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) time.

Furthermore, during this time period, what was known as the concept of martyrdom did not elicit the response that it would later evoke in the people. Martyrdom, much like the current political situation, needed favorable conditions in order to have the necessary effects in the social order and to become fuel for the coming revolution.

History has shown that if Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had continued the fight against Mūʿāwīya with the army that he had (under the conditions that were discussed in previous pages), then in all likelihood, he would not have ended up as a martyr but rather he would have been captured as a prisoner. This may sound surprising at first, but it is based on solid historical fact. When we look back in history, we see that Mūʿāwīya considered his family as having been humiliated from the time of the Conquest of Mecca onwards. His family had been well known for their animosity against Islam and the Prophet (ṣ), and they only converted when they had been completely defeated and had no other choice. As a result of this, he wished to take one of the notables of the family of the Prophet captive and finally have his revenge. If such a thing had happened, the battle of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) would not have had the effect that it ended up having on the Muslim society.

Another aspect is that if Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had continued to fight against Mūʿāwīya, and had then proceeded to lose (which was exceedingly likely, judging by the situation he was in), Mūʿāwīya would have continued his campaign far into

the Muslim cities and a very large number of people would have been slaughtered. These cities would have included Mecca, Medina, Kūfah, and Baṣrah. The number of people killed would have far exceeded the ones who were martyred in Karbalā, and Imam Ḥasan ('a) was aware of this.

It may have been for these reasons that Imam Ḥusayn ('a) abided by the peace treaty after the martyrdom of his brother Imam Ḥasan ('a). For a period of approximately 10 years, from 50 to 60 Hijrī (the last years of Mū'āwīya's rule) Imam Ḥusayn ('a) did not revolt and instead waited for an appropriate opportunity; in the meantime, he prepared the people's minds and spirits. It is clear that if he had decided to revolt, the potential reaction of the people would not have been sufficient for a full blown revolution. An uprising would not have had a significant effect on the Muslims of that time period.

Yazīd: The Detested Leader

Yazīd differed greatly in terms of his personal characteristics from his father Mū'āwīya. He did not possess the diplomacy, experience, or management skills which his father wielded with such shrewd talent. In addition, he did not care to publicly clothe himself in the garb of Islam and to make a show of obeying its regulations. In reality, he was miles behind his father in all matters of governance and rule.

Yazīd was a youth who was inexperienced, lustful, obstinate, and lacking in foresight and precaution. He was also rash, self-indulgent, lewd, shallow in thought, and foolish. Before having gained the caliphate, he had been engrossed in enjoying himself through various extravagances. After reaching power, he was no more able to control himself than before. His father had been careful not to publicly show his corruption to the masses, yet Yazīd ended up exposing himself as an irreligious and faithless figure who blatantly trampled the laws and regulations of Islam under his feet. He would openly and visibly drink wine and commit other sins.

Yazīd was so inexperienced politically, that he openly exposed all of the things which his father had worked so hard to keep hidden. He showed the government of the Umayyids as being one that was monarchical in nature and opposed to the very essence of Islam.

Yazīd's inability to keep a cover on the nature of his government proved to the people that he was unworthy of the caliphate of an Islamic state. Even the agents of the government were unable to spin his activities in a way that legitimized him. When the time came, and Imam Ḥusayn ('a) rose against Yazīd, the agents were unable to effectively suppress the truth of the uprising. This was because the people had seen the true nature of the government with their own eyes. The behavior of Yazīd proved to become a solid and undisputable sanction for the revolution of Imam Ḥusayn ('a). It lent the uprising of Imam Ḥusayn ('a), who was the grandson of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ), with the air of a fight of justice against falsehood. It would be seen by the people as a fight for returning the government of the Muslims back to it original nature and not as a fight for worldly political pow and rule.

The Movement Gains in Number

To gain insight into Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) uprising, we have to look into all of its facets. One of these facets involves the opinions and thoughts of the masses, which drastically changed after the peace treaty of Imam Ḥasan ('a). In the days that came after the peace treaty, anti-government sentiment increased considerably amongst the people. The actions of Mū'āwīya, willingly or unwillingly, added to this outgrowth in both numbers and severity.

After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥasan ('a), Mū'āwīya felt as if there was no longer any real opposition to his rule and he slowly increased the pressure on the masses. In particular, he increased the pressure on the Shias and the followers of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a). He assumed that any crimes or oppression

that he committed were now without consequence or repercussion.

Mūʿāwīya repeatedly transgressed on the rights of the Muslims. There were attacks and night raids by his violent army. These occurred all over the Muslim lands and many innocent people were killed. His nullification of the peace treaty and his forcing of the people to give an oath of allegiance to his corrupt son Yazīd (which was a clear violation of the treaty), all added to the anger. To top all of these crimes, he also had Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) poisoned. All of these things slowly added to one another and began to stain the Umayyid government and weaken its position. These actions caused a process of unification amongst the Shias, and a tightening of the general anti Umayyid movement. Gradually these factors came together and built the foundations for the rise of the Ḥusaynī (ʿa) movement.

Dr. Ṭahā Ḥusayn, a famous Egyptian scholar and writer, after describing the difficulties of the Shias at the hands of Mūʿāwīya, goes on to say: "During the last ten years of Mūʿāwīya's rule, the work of the Shias began to bear fruit, and their invitations in the east of the country and in the south of the Arabian peninsula began to spread at an extraordinary rate. This reached a point where, at the time of the death of Mūʿāwīya, a great number of people considered the cursing of Mūʿāwīya and the love of the Ahl al-Bayt as part of their religious obligations."[113]

All of these things allowed the public to see the true face of their government, and they saw the way it tortured and took away the rights of Muslims all across the Muslim lands. In essence, the mask of the Umayyid government was cast off, and its true face was revealed. All of the things which had been obstacles towards an uprising during the time of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) were now in the open and to the advantage of an anti government rebellion. The death of Mūʿāwīya added further

---

[113] ʿAlī and his Children, Translation by: Muḥammad ʿAlī Khalīlī, Third Print, Tehran, The Publications Company of Gutenburg Press, p. 298.

fuel to the fire and opened the door for a decisive revolt by Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa).

A Divinely Inspired Movement

The uprising of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) brought about a wide spread and comprehensive transformation in the Muslim society. It completely turned the status quo upside down and aroused the public opinion against the Umayyid government. It also gave rise to a number of future revolts and movements such as: the revolt of the Penitents (Tawwābīn), the revolt of the people of Medina, the revolt of Mukhtār Thaqafī, the rise of Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn, as well as many other large scale revolts. If this revolt had occurred during Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) time, none of these later movements would have arisen.

Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) movement was in reality a continuation of his elder brother's movement. Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), with the utmost patience, bore the fault finding of shortsighted people and signed the peace treaty. With this action, he opened the door for people's recognition of th Umayyid government, and for the gradual building of the mental and ideological foundations. When the grounds hac been sufficiently prepared, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) continued the movement of his brother by coming out in open revolt against the corrupt governmental system.

The Difference in Supporters

Moving past the differences between the conditions in the societies of the two respective Imams (ʿa), we must also look into the differences in their supporters. In previous pages we learned that the army of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) began to franticly disperse when a rumor was circulated in their midst. Before dispersing, they plundered the tent of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and even carried away the rug which was under his feet!

We saw that the same people who wanted to fight under the banner of the Imam (ʿa) against the Syrians and who give

their lives for this cause, became themselves the cause of the Imam (ʿa) being left unsupported. The differences are rather striking when these men are compared with the companions of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) on the night of ʿĀshūrā. Many of their speeches have been recorded in the books of history. Let us take a look at one such speech from a companion of Imam Ḥusayn (a):

"We swear by God that if we know that we will be killed, and then be brought back to life, and then killed again, and our ashes be scattered to the winds, and that this will be repeated 70 times, even then we will not separate from you until we have given our lives in your cause. We can only die but once, and this is martyrdom and an immortal honor and happiness for us."

With a group of men like this, it was possible to initiate a movement called Karbalā which continues to echo in the hearts and minds of people to this very day. The reality shows that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) began the struggle against the Umayyids, and Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) took it to its next stage.

Two Approaches for One Message

The late Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn ʿĀmūlī wrote in the .ntroduction of the invaluable book 'The Peace of Al-Ḥasan (ʿa),' which was authored by the great scholar Shaykh Rāḍī Āli Yāsīn, that: "...The most important aim of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was to remove the curtain which was covering the true face of the Umayyid government and to expose them as they were, so that the people could come to know them. This would allow the people to restrain the government in its systematic eradication of the religion of Imam Ḥasan's (ʿa) grandfather, the Holy Prophet (ṣ). This goal of the Imam (ʿa) was completely fulfilled and the mask which covered the corrupt face of the Umayyid state, was taken off and their true nature was made evident for all to see (And we thank God for this blessing)."

It was from the blessings of the plan of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa),

that his brother 'The Master of Martyrs', was able to enact the great revolution, which revealed the reality to the people. These two brothers were two different faces for the very same message. Their duties and responsibilities, in the face of their respectively unique circumstances and situations, and in the face of overcoming various difficult challenges, were in reality one and the same.

Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) had no qualms in sacrificing his own life and Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was not any more self sacrificing in the way of God than Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was. The day of Sābāṭ and the day of ʿĀshūrā were two sides of the very same struggle. The sacrifice of the day of ʿĀshūrā was made of two components; the first was Hasani (ʿa) in nature and the second was Ḥusaynī (ʿa). It was Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) who built the foundations of ʿĀshūrā and allowed it to bear fruit.

It can be said that if Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) lived during the time of his brother and was faced with the same conditions and situation, he would have acted in the exact same manner, and vice versa. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) narrated a very telling tradition about his two grandsons. He said: "Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are two leaders of Islam whether they make peace or whether they make war." This is just one small detail from th life of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), may God's peace and blessings b upon him.

The Third Imam

Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī

A Brief Introduction Into the Life of Imam Ḥusayn

The third Imam (ʿa) was born on the 3rd (or possibly 4th) of the month of Shaʿbān in the 4th year Hijrī. He was born in the blessed city of Medina. He was the second child from the marriage of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and the daughter of the Prophet, the Lady Fāṭimah (ʿa). Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) is famously known for his exceptional courage, bravery, and his timeless stand against oppression and tyranny.

The Many Facets of the Life of Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī

Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) lived for a period of 6 years until the passing of his grandfather, Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). After this, he spent 30 years alongside his father Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and participated actively in many of the important events of his caliphate. After the martyrdom of his father (in the year 40 Hijrī), he spent a period of 10 years alongside his brother Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) in the political and social struggles which took place during that time. After the martyrdom of his brother Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) (in the year 50 Hijrī), he became involved in the struggle against Mūʿāwīya ibn Abī Sufyān, at the peak of Mūʿāwīya's political power. After Mūʿāwīya's death, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was faced with the rule of Mūʿāwīya's son, Yazīd. During this time, he engaged in an uprising against Yazīd and was martyred in the land of Karbalā in the year 61 Hijrī.

This last part of Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) life (which is also the period of his Imamate) can be considered as the most important, and so it will be the main focus of this chapter.

The Struggle of Imam Ḥusayn Against Mūʿāwīya

Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) was a witness to the deviation

of the Islamic government which took place during the course of his life; due to this, he was a constant supporter of his father's political activities and struggles. One day, when he was a child during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb, he entered the mosque and saw that 'Umar was sitting on top of the pulpit. When he saw this scene, he went to the top of the pulpit and said to 'Umar: "Come down from the pulpit of my father and go on your own father's pulpit."

'Umar, who was dumbfounded, said: "My father did not have a pulpit." He then placed Imam Ḥusayn ('a) next to himself. After he came down from the pulpit, he took Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to his home and asked him: "Who taught you these words?" Imam Ḥusayn ('a) replied: "No one."

In the Battles against the Nākithīn and Qāsiṭīn

Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was also involved in his father's political and social campaigns.[114] These included the three battles, which occurred during Amīr al-Mu'minīn's ('a) caliphate. In the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was the commander of the left flank of Imam 'Alī's army.[115] In the Battle of Ṣiffīn, he also played an active role in the war, as well as his work in boosting the morale of the army.[116] In addition, he was one of the witnesses on Imam 'Alī's ('a) side in the matter of the Arbitration.

After the martyrdom of his father, the Imam ('a) participated in the socio-political activities of his brother Imam Ḥasan ('a). He was present at the battle against Mū'āwīya, and he was one of the individuals (along with 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far) with whom the matter of the peace treaty was discussed.[117] After the conclusion of the war and the

---

[114] Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, al-Iṣābat Fī Tamayyuz al-Saḥābah, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 333.

[115] Ḥafīẓ ibn 'Asākir, History of Damascus (the book concerning Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (a)), Researched by: Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Maḥmūdī, Beirut, al-Maḥmūdī Lil Ṭabā'ah Wa An-Nashr Institute, 1398 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 164.

[116] Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, Waqa'at Ṣiffīn, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 114, 249, 530.

[117] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 405.

signing of the peace treaty, he returned back to the city of Medina with his brother.[118]

The Political and Social Climate During the Life of Imam Ḥusayn

During the time of Imam Ḥusayn ('a), the deviations from the principles and foundations of Islam had reached their peak. These deviations had begun with the event of Saqīfah and they had rapidly worsened with the caliphate of 'Uthmān, until the point when they reached their peak with Mū'āwīya and his son Yazīd. Over a period of many years, Mū'āwīya, who had been appointed as the governor of Syria, had solidified his power base and eventually gained the office of the caliphate. With this seizure of power, he had established his tribe of Banū Ummayyah over the Muslims, and he had taken complete control of the public treasury and the wealth of the nation. Alongside this, Mū'āwīya had established an autocratic monarchical system, which was against the very spirit of Islam.

Mū'āwīya used a triple pronged tactic of suppression. Or one hand, he used political and economic pressure on the Muslims. The Muslims were subjected to a policy of hunger, poverty, and fear. He also engaged in widespread killings and torture of the people. These factors worked together to suppress any form of protest and quell any movement against his government. His second tactic of suppression included arousing racial discrimination, rivalry, and competition between various ethnic and tribal groups. This policy would create tension between the differing groups and both sides would be weakened in power and will, effectively suppressing any danger of revolt from all groups concerned.

His comprehensive program included plans to weaken the people both externally (through poverty, killings, and

[118] Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, al-Iṣābat Fī Tamayyuz al-Saḥābah, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 333.

torture), as well as internally (through the instigation of petty conflicts). For his third tactic of suppression, he began a campaign of fabrication and distortion of religious traditions through the use of his governmental agents. These included both sayings of the Prophet (ṣ), as well as the interpretations of the verses of the Holy Quran. Both false sayings were attributed to the Prophet (ṣ), as well as false interpretations, and these were all naturally to the benefit of Mū'āwīya's government. Through this third tactic, he gave his government a respectable and legitimate face, as well as stupefying the intellect of the masses into accepting his government and rule.

These un-Islamic policies, in addition to the support of false and deviant sects such as the Jabrīyah and Murjī'ah, which lent support to the rule and policies of Mū'āwīya, created very dangerous and deadly changes in the fabric of the Islamic society. They also helped to quiet the masses and put them in a state of obedience and submission to the government.

These policies created a transformation of the character and collective values of the society. While the Muslims generally understood that their religion did not allow them to be meek and submissive in the face of an un-Islamic and oppressive government, they were too weakened and fearful to put up any meaningful resistance. The conclusion of these policies was that the Muslims, in spite of the logic of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (ṣ), were transformed into a fearful and submissive community. This period of Muslim history is full of testimony which exhibit how this transformation and deviation seeped into the very fabric of the society and changed it for the worse.

If we compare the reaction of the people to the rule of 'Uthmān versus their reaction to the rule of Mū'āwīya, we will see the effective power of Mū'āwīya's policies. During the rule of 'Uthmān, the people rose up violently; this included the people of the largest cities in the Islamic nation such as

Medina, Kūfah, Mecca, as well as the country of Egypt. In addition, most of the smaller cities and villages also participated. During the rule of Mūʿāwīya, we see that the situation was completely different. Oppression was much more widespread; murder and torture were rampant in the society, and Muslims were deprived of their rights and their wealth. In spite of all of these factors, there was no widespread revolt against Mūʿāwīya's rule and the people were submissive and obedient towards him.

At times, there were flashes of scattered protest such as those of Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī, ʿAmr ibn Ḥamiq Khuzāʿī, as well as others. These scattered protests showed that there was a great deal of suffering and oppression in the society. Yet, these examples of resistance were not wide enough in scope or organized enough to have the necessary effects. The flames of revolt were quickly suppressed, the leaders executed, and the society was not too greatly affected by these movements.[119]

The Obstacles of Revolt during the Time of Mūʿāwīya

With the existence of such conditions in the society, a uprising would have been neither successful nor even beneficial. There were two main causes that were the most important obstacles to an uprising against Mūʿāwīya. We will explore these in some detail below:

1- The Peace Treaty of Imam Ḥasan with Mūʿāwīya

If Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) had revolted during the period of Mūʿāwīya's rule, Mūʿāwīya could have used the treaty which he had signed with Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), and which had also been approved by Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), against him. It was known amongst the people that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imam Ḥusayn

[119] For further information, please refer to: Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Mahdī, Assessment of the Husseini (a) Revolution (Thawrat al-Ḥusayn), Translation by Mahdī Pīshvā'ī, Second Print, Qum, Tawhīd Publications.

(ʿa) had a consensus in staying silent for the duration of Mūʿāwīya's life. If Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) had risen against Mūʿāwīya's rule, it was possible that Mūʿāwīya would have painted him as an opportunist and as one who breaks his pledge. With the resources that Mūʿāwīya had, this would have proven to be a significant issue in mobilizing the people's support.

With this said, we know that Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) did not consider this treaty with Mūʿāwīya as being obligatory to follow. This treaty had not been signed based on free will and personal inclinations; it was a treaty signed under compulsion. It was signed under conditions in which debate and an exchange of opinions were of no use. In addition to all of these, Mūʿāwīya had himself nullified the treaty and had not acted based on its stipulations. Therefore, such a treaty was not obligatory on Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) due to Mūʿāwīya's own nullification of the treaty. Even with all this, if the terms of the 'treaty' had been broken by Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), then Mūʿāwīya would have used it as a propaganda tool against him and it would have proven to be a significant issue.

From another angle, we must consider how the public would have judged such an uprising. As explained previously, the public at the time of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was one which had chosen submissiveness over rebellion. Therefore, in order to justify the continuation of their state, they would have branded the rebellion of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) as the breaking of a treaty with Mūʿāwīya and thus would not have followed him. It would have proven to be an easy out for a people who hadn't yet reached the point of wanting to resist.

2- Mūʿāwīya's Religious Pretenses

The rise of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) during the time of Yazīd was so energizing and motivating that its memory has lived on in the hearts of the people throughout the centuries. Even after the passing of all this time, the warriors of Karbalā are still used as inspirations and examples for all to follow. On the

other hand, if Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) had rebelled during the lifetime of Mūʿāwīya, his rebellion would not have had such a reverberation throughout history. The reason behind this is mainly in Mūʿāwīya's trickery, guile, and political cunning.

Even though Mūʿāwīya had transformed the Islamic society by enacting a tyrannical monarchical system in place of the pure Islamic government which had existed, he still realized that his power and authority were derived from the name of Islam. Due to this, he knew that he couldn't act in a way where people would see his actions as conflicting with the religion itself. He was always careful to cover his actions with a religious aura, so that his actions were always compatible with his position as the caliph of the Muslims. If he wished to do things which could not be religiously justified, then he would be careful to do them in private, away from the public eye.

From various historical documents, it is readily available that Mūʿāwīya was in reality an irreligious and corrupt individual, who had no religious convictions whatsoever. Mughayrah ibn Shuʿbah', who himself was an irreligious individual, was one of the people who would spend time with Mūʿāwīya in his private councils and as such he would hea his private words. After hearing Mūʿāwīya's words one day, h became regretful and ashamed, and said: "Mūʿāwīya is the most wicked person amongst the people."[120] This reality was naturally kept hidden from the masses, and the government was careful to keep their aura of Islamic respectability and legitimacy.

To keep this aura of legitimacy, Mūʿāwīya carefully raised the flag of ʿUthmān's death as his own personal cause. At the same time, he raised the issue of the arbitration with Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) as well as the peace treaty with Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). Using these three, he showed himself as the legitimate successor of a long line of Muslim caliphs and showed that

[120] We will explain the purpose behind Mughayrah's words in the following pages.

his authority derived from their line of rule.

Any challenge to his rule would have been judged by the masses to be a political and worldly challenge, and not a challenge based on his corruption and irreligiousness.

The Struggle of Imam Ḥusayn against Mūʿāwīya

While the above mentioned factors prevented Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) from an outright revolt, they did not prevent him from standing against the religious deviation and injustices of Mūʿāwīya's government. In the prevailing social atmosphere, where people were afraid to speak out, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) stood against the oppression which was taking place in the society and began to normalize the act of speaking out. Here we will look at three examples of how he would resist against Mūʿāwīya's government:

1- Imam Ḥusayn's Letters and Speeches of Protest

For the duration of Mūʿāwīya's life (10 years) during the imamate of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), there was a great exchange of letters between them. After any crime had been committed by Mūʿāwīya, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) would harshly criticize him and protest against his actions. This was a powerful way of emboldening the people towards criticizing the Ummayids. One of the most important of these exchanges was when Mūʿāwīya nominated his son Yazīd for the caliphate.

His Opposition with the Nomination of Yazīd as the Caliph

Mūʿāwīya, in continuing his widespread efforts to solidify the nomination of his son Yazīd as caliph, traveled to Medina in order to meet with the heads of the city. He wished to gain the pledge of the people, particularly the leaders of the city, for the successorship of his son, Yazīd. The head of these leaders was Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), and naturally, Mūʿāwīya

wanted to meet with him and receive his consent and approval. After entering the city of Medina, he visited Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) and ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbbās, and brought up the matter of Yazīd's nomination. He tried hard to gain their consent and approval, but Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) gave him the following response: "In terms of your superiority and virtues, you are subject to errors and excess. By seizing the public's wealth, you have become guilty of oppression and injustice. You have not returned the people's wealth to them and have exercised stinginess in this matter. You have involved yourself in so many forays and invasions that you have exceeded the limits and since you have not given the people their due rights, Satan has reached his ultimate goal (in regards to you).

I have understood all of what you said about Yazīd's virtues and merits in order to nominate him for the governance of the Muslims. You describe Yazīd in such a way that it is as if his way of life is hidden from the people or that you have hidden knowledge of him which the people do not possess... No, Yazīd has shown himself quite sufficiently and he has manifested his true nature. Introduce Yazīd as he truly is. Yazīd is a youth who plays with dogs and pigeons. He i capricious and has passed his whole life listening to songs anc music. Introduce Yazīd this way and leave this fruitless quest of yours. The sins which you have accumulated already are enough for you. Do not do something that when you meet with your Lord, your sins are even heavier than this. You have continued on your path of injustice for such a long period of time... and you have involved yourself in such oppression that the people's patience has worn thin. The distance between you and death is but the blink of an eye. Know that your deeds have been recorded by your Lord and on the Day of Judgment you must answer for them...."[121]

[121] Ibn Qutaybah Daynāwarī, al-Imāmah Wa al-Sīyāsah, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī , 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 184.

Mūʿāwīya's Worry of a Rebellion by Imam Ḥusayn

During this same time, Marwān ibn Ḥakam, who was the governor of Medina on behalf of Mūʿāwīya, wrote a letter to him saying the following: "'Amr ibn 'Uthmān has informed me that: A group of the Iraqi and Hijāzi notables have been going back and forth to the home of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī' and he has said: 'I do not have certainty that Ḥusayn will not revolt.'"

Marwān added to his letter that: "I have investigated this matter further, and based on the information that has reached me, he does not have the present intention of revolting and opposing us, but I do not have certainty that he will have the same intentions in the future. Write your own opinion on this matter."

After receiving this information, Mūʿāwīya wrote a letter to Marwān, as well as a second letter to Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa). The letter contained the following content: "I have received word of some of your doings. If what I have heard is correct, then I do not consider them worthy of you. I swear by God that if anyone makes a pledge, then they must be faithful to that pledge. On the other hand, if what I have heard is not true, then you are worthy of being above such things. Therefore, be careful of yourself and be faithful to your pledge. If you oppose me, you will be faced with opposition and if you act badly towards me, then you will see evil. Abstain from creating divisions in the society..."[122]

Imam Ḥusayn's Response to Mūʿāwīya

Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) answered Mūʿāwīya with these words: "Your letter has reached my hands. You have said that information has been received by you which you do not consider befitting for me and compatible with my rank and position. I must say that it is God alone who gives people

[122] Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Ansārī al-Rijāl (Famously known as Rijāl al-Kashshī), written and edited by: Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, p. 48.

salvation for their good deeds and gives them the blessing of being able to do good works.

As for the information which has reached you about me, they are words without basis, which are spoken by tale bearing flatterers who wish to create divisions in the society. They are lies and fabrications. These irreligious deviants have lied; I have neither prepared for war against you, nor do I have intentions to do so. But know that I am fearful before God for not having risen up against you and your oppressive and irreligious companions who are in reality the brothers of Satan and the party of the oppressors.

Were you not the killer of Ḥujr ibn 'Adī and his companions? The killer of men who were amongst the ones who prayed and worshipped God and who considered religious innovations as unlawful and fought hard against them? They commanded people towards the good and forbade them from the evil. After you gave them a promise of safety and swore repeatedly that you would not seek vengeance for the acts of the past, you killed them contrary to your pledge in a tyrannical manner. With this action, you showed insolence towards God and counted your pledge with him a being worthless.

Are you not the killer of 'Amr ibn Ḥamiq, the one who had submitted to God and whose body had become worn out and exhausted due to his (intense) worship? Did you not do this after giving him a promise of safety and a pledge? You killed him after giving him such a pledge that if you had given the same pledge to the animals of the desert, they would have come down from the mountains in hope of it.

Was it not you that declared Zīyād (the son of Sumayyah) as your brother and the son of Abū Sufyān, while the Prophet (ṣ) had said: 'The newborn is associated to its father and the adulterer must be stoned.'

How I wish this matter had been concluded with that, but it was not so; after declaring the son of Sumayyah as your brother, you made him powerful over the Muslim nation. By

attaching himself to your power, he began to kill the Muslims, cut off their hands and feet, and hung them from palm trees! Oh Mūʿāwīya, you made the world so narrow and confined for the Muslims that it was as if they are not of you and you are not of them.

Are you not the killer of Ḥaḍramy? His crime was that this same Zīyād told you that 'he is of the followers of 'Alī'. The religion of 'Alī ('a) is the very same religion of his cousin, the Holy Prophet (ṣ). It is in the name of this very religion that you are presently ruling. If it was not for this same religion, you and your fathers would still be in the state of ignorance and your greatest honor would be the toil and hardship of the two journeys during the summer and winter to Yemen and Syria. God, under our leadership, saved you from a life of such misery and wretchedness.

Oh Mūʿāwīya, one of the things you said was that I should not create division and conflict in this community. I do not see any sedition greater than that of your governance and rule. You also said that I should be careful of my actions, my religion, and the religion of Muḥammad (ṣ). Whenever I (think of my responsibilities and look at the religion of Muḥammad (ṣ)) I do not see any duty greater than that of fighting against you, and this would be counted a war in the way of God. If I restrain myself from rising up against you due to certain reasons, then I seek God's forgiveness and I ask that God guide me towards actions which are the cause of his good pleasure and satisfaction.

Oh Mūʿāwīya, you also mentioned that if I was to do evil towards you, then you would do evil towards me, and if I was to show you enmity, then I would see enmity in return. I must say that in this world the righteous have always faced the evil (ones) with enmity. I am hopeful that my enmity towards you does not bring me injury, and that the harm of your malevolence will return to yourself and be the cause of your own destruction. Therefore, have as much enmity as you are able to muster!

Oh Mūʿāwīya, fear God and know that all of your deeds, large or small, have been recorded before him. Know that God will not forget your crimes, in which you murder people based on suspicion, and where you arrest people based on the slightest doubt, and where you have appointed a youth who drinks and plays with dogs as the ruler of this government.

With these actions, you have sentenced yourself to perdition, corrupted your religion, and trampled over the rights of this nation. Wa Salām."[123]

2- Imam Ḥusayn's Sermon at the Annual Gathering of the Ḥajj

One or two years before the death of Mūʿāwīya, governmental pressure against the Shias had reached its peak in severity. During this time, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) departed for the annual ceremony of the Ḥajj pilgrimage. While ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbbās and ʿAbdullah ibn Jaʿfar were alongside him, he asked that the Ṣahābah,[124] the Tābiʿīn,[125] and the Banī Hāshim, as well as the notables of the Islamic community to gather in his tent at 'Minā'. Seven hundred members of th Tābiʿīn came, as well as two hundred members of th Ṣahābah. When they had gathered, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) stooc up and began to deliver a sermon. He said: "Have you seen what this oppressive man has done with us and our followers? I am going to say something before you, which if it is true, confirm its truthfulness, and if it is untrue, then call out its untruthfulness. Hear my words and write them down. When you go to various cities and return amongst your own tribe, then convey this message to people who are trustworthy and invite them towards our leadership. I fear that this matter (the

---

[123] Ibn Qutaybah Daynāwarī, al-Imāmah Wa al-Sīyāsah, Cairo, Maktabah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī , 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 184. This letter, with slight differences in wording, can be found in the following sources:
- Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 44, p. 212.

[124] A name used to refer to the companions of the Prophet (s)

[125] A name used to refer to the 'Companions of the Companions'

leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt) will be forgotten and the truth will be annihilated and overtaken by falsehood."

Then, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) mentioned the virtues and radiant precedence of his father, Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (ʿa), and the Ahl al-Bayt. He then explained[126] the religious innovations, anti-Islamic actions, and crimes of Mūʿāwīya's government. When this sermon was delivered and spread throughout the various cities, it ended up creating the foundations of anti-government activity against Mūʿāwīya and his government.

Hassan ibn ʿAlī ibn Shuʿbah, who was one of the famous scholars of the fourth century, has narrated a sermon from the book 'Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl' from Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa). The location and date for the delivery of this sermon are not clear, but its historical context, witnesses, and textual context all point to it being the very same sermon that he delivered in Minā. In order to further understand this topic, let us narrate various parts of this sermon:

"Oh men of influence and strength! You are a group that is famed for its knowledge, goodness, and benevolence. Under the light of God's religion, the hearts of men have viewed you with the traits of greatness and majesty. The noble ones take :ount of you and the weak and powerless hold you dear. The)eople who are at the same rank, and whom you do not have any claims of precedence over, hold you in preference to themselves... I fear that difficulties and calamities will descend upon you, for you have reached a high rank and position, which others do not possess, and you have gained eminence over them, but you do not respect the pure and pious people, even though you are held in respect amongst the people because of God.

You see with your very own eyes that they break God's

---

126 The Book of Salīm ibn Qay's al-Kūfī, Qum, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, p. 206.
- Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, al-Maṭbaʿat al-Murtaḍawīyah, vol. 2, p. 161.
- ʿAllāmah Amīnī, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn, al-Ghadīr, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1397 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 198.

covenant and they oppose his law. Yet this does not bring about fear or apprehension in you. If a treaty of your father was nullified, you would feel distressed, but you don't pay any attention to the fact that the Holy Prophet's (ṣ) contracts have been broken and considered as paltry and worthless. The weak and disabled in this Islamic country have been left without guardians and assistance and no one has any mercy on them. Yet you do not do anything to help them, nor do you at least help those who are trying to help them. By collaborating and compromising with the oppressors, you have relieved yourselves of your responsibilities. God has given the order of preventing evil and restraining people from it, yet you are heedless of this law. The calamity of you scholars of this nation is more severe and more difficult than others. The situation and position of the scholars of this religion is under attack; how I wish you would understand this.

The reins of leadership must be in the hands of those who are knowledgeable in God's law and are trustworthy in its halal[127] and haram[128]. You were worthy of this rank, but they took it from your hands. They took it away from you when you left the limits of the truth, and in spite of clear reason you created differences in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣ). If you had tolerated difficulties in the way of God, then the government would be in your hands right now, and the society would be ruled under your guidance. Yet you gave the oppressors dominance over your destinies and delivered the rule of God (the government) over to them. When you did this, the oppressors mixed the halal and the haram together and they immersed themselves in lusts and capriciousness. Nothing caused the oppressors to dominate over you but your fear of death and your attachment to this world which lasts but a few days. You, by coming short in your responsibilities, gave the weak over to the oppressors so that they made one

[127] That which is lawful.
[128] That which is unlawful.

group as subdued slaves, and another group as utterly defeated and wretched individuals. You followed the wicked, and as a result of this audacity before the greatness of God, they acted on their whims and followed their capricious desires in their method of governance.

In every city, they sent their agents and helpers to the tops of the pulpits, and the whole of the Islamic nation is in their possession. They are able to do whatever they wish and the people are their slaves and under their control. Whenever they commit oppression on these powerless people, the people are unable to defend themselves. Some of these people are obstinate bullies who pressure whoever is weak and unable to defend themselves. Others among them are governors who are atheists and do not believe in God.

I am surprised at this situation! And why should I not be in a state of surprise when the land is overtaken by an oppressive, wicked, and deceitful individual, who rules over the Muslims without any pity or mercy. God is the judge over this struggle between us.

Oh Lord, this movement is not for power or a competition over who will govern, nor is it for gaining this world's wealth. It is rather for showing the people the signs of your religion and to enact reforms in the Islamic nation so that the oppressed will have sanctuary from the claws of the oppressors, and that your religion and way of life will be enacted.

Therefore, if you (notables of this nation) do not assist me, then the oppressors will prevail over you and will strive in extinguishing the light of your Prophet (ṣ)..."[129]

3- Seizing the Government's Wealth

At one point in time, a caravan from Yemen was passing through Medina to its final destination of Syria laden with

---

[129] Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, Tuḥuf al-'Uqūl, Qum, The Publications Office of Jāmi'ah' Mudarisīn, 1363 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 237-239.

money and property belonging to the Ummayad government. When Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) learned of this, he went out and ended up seizing it. He then took the wealth and distributed it amongst the poor of the Hāshimites, as well as others. He then wrote a letter to Mūʿāwīya saying the following:

"A caravan from Yemen was passing through here carrying money, fabrics, and perfumes. It was headed to Syria's public treasury, where you and your relatives, who have been filling your stomachs and pockets with the public's money, would take it as your own. I had a need for the wealth, and so I seized it. Wa Salām."

Mūʿāwīya became extremely angry at this action and wrote a very harsh letter to Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa).[130] Yet, due to his own situation, he was not able to do anything beyond this letter at that point in time. Without doubt, this action of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was an open step towards introducing Mūʿāwīya's government as illegitimate. He was openly announcing to the people that Mūʿāwīya was not worthy of his position and that they too could take steps in opposing him. At the same time, such an action was very dangerous and no one but Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) had the courage to do such a thing.

The Nature and the Factors Related to the Revolt o ʿĀshūrā

In regards to the rise of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), certain questions have been put forward which will help in shedding light on the Imam's actions. These are as follows:

1- If Yazīd had not attempted to force Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) to give him the oath of allegiance, would he have still opposed Yazīd's rule?

2- If the people of Kūfah had not invited Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), would his uprising still have taken place?

3- Was the movement of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) an unanticipated

[130] Sharīf al-Qarshī, Bāqir, The Life of Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (a), Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, vol. 2, p. 231 (narrated from the Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah of Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd).

one which took place without careful consideration and planning? Was it simply the result of a buildup of social pressure? Or was it an uprising that was based on lengthy planning and preparation?

In order to shed some light on these questions, it is necessary to first keep in mind that, contrary to natural occurrences which are caused by one factor, social occurrences are usually caused by a multitude of factors.

The rise of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) consisted of various factors which all contributed to his movement. Let us take a look at these factors in some detail below:

The Factors Which Gave Rise to the Movement of Imam Ḥusayn

The factors which gave rise to the movement of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) can be divided into three main sections:

1- Yazīd's attempt to force a pledge of allegiance from Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa).

2- The people of Kūfah inviting Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) to their city and asking him for his leadership.

3- The element of 'commanding the good and forbidding the evil'. This was Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) slogan from the very first moment of his departure from Medina.

We will further explain each of these points in detail so that we can examine what role they played and how much weight they had in Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) movement.

1- Opposition in Pledging Allegiance to Yazīd

In terms of a timeline, one of the first developments in the movement of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was when Yazīd attempted to force a pledge of allegiance from him. Historians have recorded that Yazīd began this process after the death of Mūʿāwīya during the middle of the month of Rajab in the year 60 Hijrī.[131] He wrote to Walīd ibn ʿUtbah ibn Abī Sufyān

[131] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 200.

(the governor of Medina) and asked him to get a pledge of allegiance from Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) and to not allow him any opportunity for delay.

When Yazīd's letter reached Walīd, Walīd called for Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) and explained the situation to him. Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), who had opposed the nomination of Yazīd from the beginning, again refused to give his pledge. This was because a pledge of allegiance to Yazīd did not only mean the confirmation of the right of a corrupt ruler over all of the Muslims, but it also meant the confirmation of his religious innovations and actions which were counter to the very essence of Islam. His rule was distinctly different from that of his father, Mūʿāwīya.

This pressure from the governor of Medina continued for several days, but Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) resisted and refused to comply. Due to the severity of the pressure, he eventually left for Mecca on the 28th of Rajab, alongside a group of his family members and relatives. During the third of Shaʿbān, he arrived in the holy city of Mecca.

The selection of Mecca for Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) was based c its religious significance as a city of sanctuary. In addition, was the season for the Ḥajj pilgrimage, and due to the vast numbers and variety of people who would come for the annual rite, it was the best location for the conveyance of Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) message.

Up to this point, Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) movement was more of a reactive movement than a proactive one. In essence, Yazīd, through the use of pressure, wished to secure a pledge from Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), but the Imam was refusing this request. In spite of this, it is clear that Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) began this movement of opposition against Yazīd even before the letters from the Kufans began to reach him. Even if they had failed to invite him as their leader, and promised him their support, it is clear that he still would not have acceded to the pledge of allegiance.

2- The Kufan's Invitation of Imam Ḥusayn

Imam Ḥusayn ('a), who had entered the holy city of Mecca on the third of Sha'bān, took up the city as his place of residence and began to publicly reveal the corrupt un-Islamic nature of the government of Yazīd. Reports of his opposition and his new place of residence soon reached the people of Iraq. The people of Kūfah still remembered the just rule of Imam 'Alī ('a), as only twenty years had passed since that time. The effects of his education and training on the populace had not been fully effaced by the Umayyid government. The orphans which Imam 'Alī ('a) had raised, alongside the widows that he had provided for and protected, were still alive at that time. Therefore, the people of Kūfah gathered amongst themselves, and through a judging of the situation, decided to disobey Yazīd and invite Imam Ḥusayn ('a) as their leader.

After much discussion, various Kufan leaders such as Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad, Musayyib ibn Najabah, Rafā'ah ibn Shaddād Bajali, and Ḥabīb ibn Maẓāhir wrote letters to Imam Ḥusayn ('a), and invited him personally to Iraq, asking for his leadership. The first of these letters reached Imam Ḥusayn ('a) on the 10th of the holy month of Ramaḍān during the 60th year Hijrī.[132] Likewise, the sending of these letters continued until it reached the point that 600 letters reached Imam Ḥusayn ('a) in the span of a single day. In total, he ended up receiving over 12,000 letters.[133]

In view of this flood of letters and requests, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) felt a definite responsibility to accept the request of the Iraqis. He showed a positive reaction towards the letters, and sent his cousin, Muslim ibn 'Aqīl, as his representative to Kūfah. Muslim ibn 'Aqīl was ordered to further appraise the situation and then report back about the conditions in Kūfah and the truthfulness of the people in what they were saying. If

---

[132] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 203.
- Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 16.

[133] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 15.

the Kufans were being truthful, then Imam Ḥusayn ('a) would set off for Iraq.

Even before the arrival of the letters and requests from Kūfah, Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) duty was to reject the pledge of Yazīd; there was no way that he could pledge his allegiance to the new caliph. When the Kufans began to send letters, this added a new aspect to the conflict and it created a new responsibility for the Imam ('a). Imam Ḥusayn ('a) judged the situation as follows: At this point in time, the Kufans have insisted very strongly and with great enthusiasm on my coming. If they are true with their words, then this is good, and if they are not, then I will return to Mecca or even another city in the Muslim world.

It is exceedingly clear that his resistance to Yazīd's request for a pledge of allegiance came before the invitation of the Kufans. The first letter of the Kufans reached the Imam ('a) almost 40 days after he took up residence in the city of Mecca. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Imam Ḥusayn ('a) refused to pledge allegiance to Yazīd only after the Kufans had invited him. This is clear from the sequence of events which took place. If the events of Kūfah had not taken place and the people had not invited him, he still would not have pledged his allegiance to Yazīd.

3- The Factor of 'Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil'

The slogan of 'commanding the good and forbidding evil' was Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) most fundamental message from the very first day of his departure from Medina. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that since Yazīd was pressuring him for his pledge of allegiance, then (and only then) Imam Ḥusayn ('a) found it necessary to rise up against him. Even if Yazīd had not forced him into such a position, and even if the people of Kūfah had not invited him, still it would have been necessary for Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to rise up against the tyrant Yazīd.

The logic of Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) movement was one of

protest and rebellion against the corrupt and un-Islamic government of Yazīd. This was a government which had covered the Islamic world in social, political, and economic corruption. Unlike the government of Mū'āwīya, the conditions had become unbearably bad in these respects, and it was therefore a responsibility of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to rise up against Yazīd.

All three of these factors played a role in the movement and uprising of Imam Ḥusayn ('a). Each one necessitated a type of responsibility and duty upon him. As to the first factor that was mentioned, it involved a condition of defense, since the government was attempting to force Imam Ḥusayn ('a) into a pledge of allegiance and he was refusing it at all costs. In terms of the second factor, an opportunity opened up for cooperation with the Kufans, and he showed a positive reaction to the invitation. As for the third factor, it had become an Islamic duty on Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to rebel and rise up against Yazīd due to the prevailing conditions and the situation of the Muslim nation. Therefore, even without the existence of the previous two conditions, the revolt would have still taken place.

The Weight of Each of These Three Factors

Now let us see which of these three factors carried the most weight in comparison to the others. Without doubt, the Kufan's invitation carried a great deal of weight since Imam Ḥusayn ('a) showed a positive response to their requests for leadership. If the conditions were favorable, then he would have gone on to establish an Islamic government in Kūfah.

Still higher than this factor was Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) refusal to pledge allegiance to Yazīd. This is shown by multiple announcements that he would not accede to pressure at any cost, nor would any amount of pressure cause him to change his stance.

In spite of this, the highest value must be given to the third factor, which was the commanding of good and the

forbidding of evil. This is proven by understanding that if the Kufan's support had been the most essential, then Imam Ḥusayn ('a) would have simply turned back when the people's support evaporated. Yet history shows that he did not turn back when the Kufan support failed to materialize, and he continued on his way to Iraq. Not only did he refuse to turn back, but his most spectacular sermons were delivered after the martyrdom of his cousin Muslim ibn 'Aqīl. This shows the high level of importance that 'commanding the good and forbidding the evil' had in the movement of Imam Ḥusayn ('a).

Through understanding this issue, it is clear that even without the invitation of the Kufans or the pressure of Yazīd, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) would have still risen up against the corrupt government of the Ummayids. In order for this third point to become even clearer, let us examine several historical documents which we have at our disposal.

1- Imam Ḥusayn's Will

Before leaving the holy city of Medina, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) wrote his will and delivered it to his brother Muḥammad Ḥanafīyah. In it, he explained his reasons for rising as the reformation of the Muslim community, 'commanding the good and forbidding the evil', and reviving the way of life of his grandfather, the Prophet, as well as his father, Imam 'Alī. In this will, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) first explained his beliefs in regards to the oneness of God, prophethood, and resurrection, and then he wrote the following: "I am not leaving Medina from selfishness or caprice. Nor am I leaving it to create corruption and oppression. My goal in this movement is to reform the corruption which has taken place in this nation. I aim to command the good and forbid the evil, and to advance the way of life of my grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ), and my father, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a). Whoever follows me in this path... should know that I am about to depart, until the day that God judges between me and these

people, for he is the best of judges...."[134]

In this will, Imam Ḥusayn ('a) announces his four main motives. These are as follows:

1- Reforming the Muslim nation
2- Commanding the good
3- Forbidding the evil
4- Following and reviving the religious creed of his grandfather and father

2- Unacceptable Silence

Imam Ḥusayn ('a), on his way to Iraq, ended up delivering a sermon to the army of Ḥurr at a place called 'Bayḍah'. In it, he explained his motives and reasons for rising. He said: "Oh People, the Prophet of God (ṣ) said: 'Any Muslim who comes face to face with an oppressive king, who considers the haram[135] of God as being halal,[136] who breaks the divine covenant, opposes the way and laws of the Prophet (ṣ), opens the way for sinfulness, injustice, and enmity, and yet (he) does not show this king any opposition, either through his actions or his words, then it is up to God that he does not condemn and punish this (quiet) individual with the same punishment due to the oppressive king.'

Oh people, be aware that these people (the Umayyids) have rejected the obedience of God and are following (the path of) Satan. They promote vice and corruption, and have suspended the limits of God's legislation. They have made that which is exclusive for the family of the Prophet (ṣ), exclusive for themselves. I am the most suitable and competent person for guiding and leading the Muslim society and for rising against all of the corruption, as well as the corrupt ones, who have changed the religion of my

---

[134] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 44, p. 329.

[135] The things which are unlawful

[136] The things which are lawful

ancestors..."[137]

3- The Effacement of Prophetic Customs and the Propagation of Religious Innovations

After Imam Ḥusayn ('a) entered the holy city of Mecca, he sent a letter to the leaders of Baṣrah. In it, he mentions the era of the previous caliphs, where the true leaders where forced aside from politics and governance, and they endured this for the sake of not creating conflict and division amongst the Muslims. He mentioned how they had endured these difficulties for the sake of the greater good. After this, he mentioned: "...I am sending my messenger to you with this letter. I invite you towards the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet, for we are positioned in a situation where the Prophet's way of life has been completely destroyed and the religious innovations are prevalent. If you listen to my words, then I will guide you to the right path. May the greetings, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you."[138]

4- The Truth is No Longer Being Acted Upon

On the way to Iraq, at a place called Dhī Ḥusum, Imar Ḥusayn ('a) stood up while amongst his companions an began to deliver a sermon. He said: "Our circumstances are exactly that which you see. The condition of our time has been seriously transformed; ugliness is openly manifest, and virtue and goodness have publicly departed and only a few droplets of it remain. People are passing their days in wretched and miserable conditions, and life has become much like a barren

---

[137] Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 85.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 229.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 48.

[138] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 200.
- Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 54.

and stony pasture in which life is harsh and difficult.

Do you not see that the truth is no longer acted upon, and people do not restrain themselves from falsehood? In such a situation, a person of faith would be eager to die and meet his Lord. In such abject and corrupt surroundings, I know of death as nothing but prosperity and happiness, while life (with these oppressors) is nothing but vexation, torment, and anguish.

These people are the slaves of this world, and religion is just a movement of their tongues. Their support and assistance of religion is to the point that their lives are in comfort and ease, and when they are put to the test, the religious ones will be but few."[139]

An Uprising Based on Awareness

Modern-day materialists view uprisings and rebellions as unavoidable social phenomenon, which occur when pressure builds up in a given society. A similar analogy can be drawn by a pot which is sealed off, while pressure builds within it. If the pressure is not relieved in one way or another, then inevitably the pot will explode from the pressure. Similar to this, certain pressures build up in any given society and over time, they will increase until they explode and give vent to these class differences and inequalities; this is considered a natural phenomenon in the timeline of all societies.

Another way of explaining this is the parable of an angry individual in whom the pressure of anger builds up to the point where he loses control. At this point, such an individual will simply react based on these internal pressures without really having a choice in the matter. Of course, this person will feel regret for their anger and their lack of control at a

---

[139] Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, Tuḥuf al-'Uqūl, Qum, The Publications Office of Jāmi'ah' Mudarisīn, 1363 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 245.
- Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 86.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 229.

later time but at that specific moment, they will just react in order to vent their anger.

By reviewing the sermons and letters of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), it is clear that his movement did not have this nature and it was not of this category of social phenomenon. It was a calculated and well thought out uprising based on considerations of responsibility and duty; in addition, the dangers were also well understood. Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) welcomed martyrdom with full awareness and comprehension. He also wanted his companions to select it while being fully aware of their situation. It was for this very reason that on the night of ʿĀshūrā, he gave them the choice of freely leaving and announced to everyone that whoever remained with him would be killed by the next day. Therefore, his companions who remained, remained with full awareness of what it meant and what was waiting for them. They accepted their stand alongside Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) with full knowledge that they would be martyred.

From the perspective of materialists who believe in the theory of societal pressure, leaders of revolts do not have much influence in their movements; they are just simple figureheads. Due to this factor, leaders are not really holder of ethical or moral stances; instead, they are simply part of th pressure equation. This is naturally contrary to the Shia stance, and the words, intentions, and ethics of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) are open for all to research and see.

The Spread of Umayyid Influence in the Centers of Power

Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) launched his movement under the overall plan of reforming many key aspects of the Islamic society. The society had fallen into disarray due to the deviations caused by the corrupt and mismanaged Ummayid government. Due to this deviation, many social dangers and vices had reared their heads. Among them was a proliferation of religious innovations, the effacement of the prophetic way of life, and an increase in corruption and sin.

During this time, the government and the wealth of the Muslim nation had fallen into the hands of the Umayyid dynasty. The Umayyids had been one of the strongest opponents of Islam and the Prophet (ṣ) from the earliest days. They had continued fighting against the Muslims until the conquest of Mecca, when it became impossible to continue their fight openly. They were one of the last families to accept Islam, and even then, they did so only due to the fact that no other options were open to them. In doing so, they became known as hypocrites and slowly began a struggle for gaining dominance and power in the newly structured society and government. Over time, they gained power and took over the more important roles in the government until the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) when Mūʿāwīya took over the caliphate of the Muslim nation.

When this took place, the clan hid their evil intentions against the Muslims and tried to conceal the fact that they were replacing the Muslim government with one based on concepts from the 'Age of Ignorance' before the coming of Islam. However, as time passed, they couldn't conceal their true nature and it ended up manifesting itself in a significant way. At times, their words spoken in private gatherings would be leaked where people would begin to realize who and what they were.

During one incident, when ʿUthmān had recently become caliph, the Ummayids all gathered at his home and closed all of the doors. Abū Sufyān, who was present, asked: "Is there anyone here other than you (meaning the members of the Ummayid clan)?"[140] The people replied: "No." Then he continued and said: "Now that the government has reached your hands, pass it to one another much like a ball, and strive that it does not leave the Umayyid clan. I swear on what I believe that there is neither a punishment in the hereafter, nor an accounting; there is neither a Hell nor a Day of

[140] At this point in time, Abū Sufyān had become blind and that is why he was asking

Judgment."[141]

It was this very same Abū Sufyān who was one day[142] passing by the graves of the martyrs of Uḥud when he kicked the grave of Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and said: "The very thing which we were fighting with you for yesterday with our swords, is today in the hands of our children and they now play with it."[143]

Mūʿāwīya's Actions Against Islam

Mūʿāwīya, during his time as caliph, held a private night session where Mughayrah ibn Shuʿbah (who was one of his governors) was present. During this session, he told Mughayrah that his most important aims in life were all connected with the destruction and complete effacement of Islam. This would have remained a hidden matter, but because of Mughayrah's son, they have been recorded in the books of history. His son Muṭṭarrif narrates that: "My father and I were guests of Mūʿāwīya in Damascus. My father would go back and forth to Mūʿāwīya's palace and have sessions with him. He would return to his residence, all the while speaking highly of his wit and intellect, and praising him. One night though, he returned in a state of distress and melancholy. I understood that something eventful had happened that had caused this condition.

I asked him the reason and he replied: 'Oh my son, I have just now returned from the most filthy and evil of men.' I

---

[141] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, al-Tab'at al-'ūlā, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 9, p. 53 (Exposition of the 139th sermon).
- The words of Abū Sufyān have been narrated by Ibn 'Abd al-Bir, Al-Isti'āb Fī al-Ma'rifah al-Aṣḥāb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1328 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 87.
- They can also be found in Taqī al-Dīn Maqrīzī in his book al-Nizā' wa al-Takhāṣum Fīmā Bayn Banī Ūmayyah wa Banī Hāshim (Cairo, Maktabah Ahrām) with slight differences in who Abū Sufyān spoke to.

[142] This was during the time of 'Uthmān's caliphate

[143] Tastarī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Tehran, The Center for Book Publications, 1379 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 10, p. 80.

asked him what had happened. He replied: 'Tonight I was sitting in a private session with Mū'āwīya and I asked him: Now that you have reached your desires and goals and you have secured the government, what would happen if you acted with justice and goodness at this last stage in your life. What would happen if you would not act so badly against the Hashimites, for they are after all your relatives? In addition to this, they are not in a state to pose a danger to your rule anymore?'

Mū'āwīya replied: 'Alas! Alas! Abū Bakr took up the caliphate and he was just. Yet after his death, only his name remained. 'Umar also took up the caliphate for a period of 10 years, and he endured many hardships and difficulties; yet after his death, of him only his name remained. Then our brother 'Uthmān, whom no one can reach in dignity and honor, also came to power. Yet, at the moment of his death, his name was also buried alongside him. In spite of this, all across the Muslim nation, the name of this Hashimite man (the Prophet) is cried out five times each and every day (during the call to prayer). Now with this present condition that we are in (that the names of the three caliphs are no longer remembered, but the name of the Prophet (ṣ) is remembered 5 times daily), what way is there except to let his name die and have it buried.'"

These words of Mū'āwīya clearly show his disbelief. Many years later, these same words were mentioned by some narrators of tradition to the 'Abbāsid caliph Ma'mūn. When he heard these words, he issued a directive throughout the Muslim nation ordering that the people curse Mū'āwīya.[144] These are all indications of how deviant the Umayyid government had become. However much they attempted to conceal their true beliefs and ideology, the reality eventually did leak out and was recorded in the pages of history.

[144] Mas'ūdī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 454.

Yazīd: The Detested Ruler

Yazīd, who was raised in the lap of the Umayyid family, was naturally raised with their ideology and way of life. At the time of his caliphate, he did not possess one iota of faith in the religion of Islam; and yet this was the same religion which his government claimed to represent.

Yazīd was a youth who was inexperienced, lustful, obstinate, and lacking in foresight and precaution. He was also rash, pleasure seeking, lewd, shallow in thought, and lacking in wisdom. Before having gained the caliphate, he had been engrossed in pleasure seeking and various extravagances. Unsurprisingly, after he reached power, he was still not able to control himself. His father had (at least publicly) not shown his corruption to the masses. Yazīd, on the other hand, ended up exposing himself as an irreligious ruler who publicly trampled the laws and regulations of Islam under his feet and went to the extreme limits of pleasure seeking. He would openly drink wine and commit other indecencies and sins. He would stay up at nights while drunk and compose verses o lewd poetry. Some of these have been recorded in the book of history:

"Oh my boon companions, get up and listen to the melodious and pleasing songs of the minstrels. Drink cup after cup of wine and leave debate and intellectual and moral thoughts behind you. The melodious music and singing of minstrels restrains me from hearing the Adhān[145] and the Takbīr[146]. I am ready to trade the heavenly 'Ḥūris' (which are promised for later) with a cask of wine (which is here in the present). (Let the things which are present be ours, and the things which are promised later to be for the people who believe in the hereafter.)"[147]

Yazīd would openly and directly deny the prophethood of

---

[145] The Muslim call to prayer

[146] The phrase of Allāhu Akbar, or God is the Greatest

[147] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt Al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 291.

the Prophet (ṣ) and the revelation which he had received. Just like his grandfather, Abū Sufyān, he considered these things as nothing more than stories of the ancients. This became even clearer at the time of his supposed victory over Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), when he began to recite some verses of poetry. He said: "The Hashimites played with the kingship and governance, and there is no hereafter, nor was there any revelation."

He was also fueled by hate against the Muslim leaders who had killed his relatives in the Battle of Badr. He considered the killing of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) as revenge for the relatives that he had lost during the early days of Islam. He said: "How I wish our nobles, who were killed at Badr, were alive today to say: 'Oh Yazīd....well done.'"[148]

Another example is when Mūʿāwīya sent his son Yazīd (with Sufyān ibn Awf Ghāmidī) alongside the army for war against the Roman Empire. He wished to show that Yazīd was not only a man of the banquet table, but he was also a man of war. Yazīd brought along his favorite wife, Umm Kulthūm, on the campaign. Sufyān entered the Roman lands with his army before Yazīd, but at a land called Ghadh Ghadūnah,[149] which had a harsh climate and polluted water, the Muslim army was afflicted with fevers and smallpox.

Yazīd, who had not reached this area (he was in an area called Dīr Murrān), was busy resting and enjoying himself with Umm Kulthūm when he heard about the critical situation of the army. At hearing the news, he composed some verses of poetry, which are very telling. His poem, roughly translated, reads: "I am here in Dīr Murrān, [150] amid comfortable rooms, while leaning against plush cushions. Here, Umm Kulthūm is alongside me and I do not care if the Muslim soldiers, who are afflicted with fever and smallpox,

---

[148] Ḥajj Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, Tatamah al-Muntahā Fī Waqāya' Ayām al-Khūlafā', Second Print, Tehran, The Book Share Publishing Company, 1333 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 44.

[149] Ghadh Ghadūnah is the name of an area on the borderlands of Syria and the ancient Roman Empire.

[150] Dīr Murrān is an area close to Damascus. It was an area famous for its corruption and sinful activities such as drinking and debauchery.

die at Ghadh Ghadūnah."[151]

It is very clear what fate would befall the nation if such an individual, whose measure of compassion and sympathy was nonexistent for the Muslim army (which he was supposedly the commander of), takes on the caliphate of the Muslims and has the keys to their public treasury at his disposal. Indeed, after his caliphate, Yazīd's court did become a center for various forms of corruption and sin. Stories of his corruption and irreligious nature soon spread throughout the society. Not only did stories spread throughout the society, but his very presence had a direct effect which spread waves of corruption and sin throughout the Muslim community. Things had gotten so bad that even the holy atmosphere of the twin cities of Mecca and Medina had become corrupted and polluted.[152] In the end, Yazīd ended up dying as a resul' of his caprice and loose lifestyle. His drinking of massiv amounts of alcohol poisoned him and he died as a result o it.[153]

It is interesting to note that Mas'ūdī, one of the famous historians of Islam, has narrated that: "Yazīd, in his dealings with the people, had taken up the method of Pharaoh; in fact, Pharaoh's behavior was better than his."[154] The number of historical witnesses and documents attesting to Yazīd's unclean lifestyle and corrupted rule are so many that mentioning them would be far outside the scope of this book. What has been introduced so far is sufficient in showing the overall conditions of his rule and his personal characteristics.

---

[151] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, Third Print, Tehran, translation by Dr. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Āyātī, The Center For Cultural and Intellectual Publications, 1362 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 160.
- Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā Balādhūrī, Insāb al-Ashrāf, Baghdad, Maktab al-Muthannā, vol. 4, p. 3.

[152] Mas'ūdī, 'Alī ibn Al Ḥusayn, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 67.

[153] Akhtab Khawārizmī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Researched by Shaykh Muḥammad Samāwī, Qum, Maktabat al-Mufīd, vol. 2, p. 183.

[154] Mas'ūdī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 68.

Yazīd's Inclination towards Christianity

In addition to what was mentioned above, evidence seems to show that Yazīd was raised based on Christian beliefs. Even if evidence of this is not one hundred percent certain, it is still very clear that he at least had an inclination towards Christianity.

Pointing towards this body of evidence, the scholar ʿAbdullah Alā'ily has written:

It may seem strange at first to consider Yazīd's upbringing as one based on Christianity and the reader may even reject it initially. Yet there is evidence for this claim in the historical texts. Yazīd's mother was from the tribe of Banī Kalb, who had been Christians before the time of Islam... Yazīd was raised in this tribe for the entire period of his youth. During his most critical years of training and education, when children are most open to forming their character and beliefs, Yazīd was raised in this tribe's midst. This aspect of Christian belief from his mother's side was mixed with a deep-rooted hatred of Islam from his father's side; both of them were embedded within his psyche.

In addition to this, the historians have mentioned that some of his teachers were also Christians. The negative effects of such an upbringing are quite evident for an individual who is to take hold of the destiny of the Muslim nation. According to historical accounts, Yazīd would not conceal his Christian inclinations; in fact, he would openly reveal them. He is recorded as saying: "If wine is unlawful in the religion of Aḥmad (Islam), then take it and drink it under the auspices of the religion of Christ."[155]

Another interesting point involves the government of

---

[155] Ḥajj Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī, Tatamat al-Muntahā Fī Waqāyaʿ Ayām al-Khūlafā, Second Print, Tehran, The Book Share Publishing Company, 1333 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 43. According to the original unaltered religion of Christianity, much like in Islam, the drinking of wine was also prohibited. Yazīd's inclinations were in reality an inclination to the corruptions and distortions which had taken hold in Christianity and not to its original pure form.

Rome having some influence in the workings of the Umayyid government; some of the Roman Empire's Christians were actually advisors to the Umayyid government. According to historians, it was a Christian named Sar Jawn the Roman[156] who advised Yazīd to place 'Ubaydullah Ibn Zīyād (the governor of Baṣrah at the time) as the governor of Kūfah when Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was traveling to that city. This was while the governor of Kūfah had been Nu'mān ibn Bashīr up to that point.[157]

The Messengers of Karbalā

It is interesting to note that most revolutions and movements are composed of two main components: there is 'blood' and then there is the 'message'. What is meant by blood is an armed uprising for the sake of the movement at hand. What is meant by message is the delivery and conveyance of the revolutionary message and goals of the movement to the masses.

In the success of a revolution or a movement, the second point isn't less important than the first. If the goals of the movement are not propagated and explained to the masses, then the movement will be bereft of any backing and support. Furthermore, whatever the movement's goals happen to be, the opposition (which usually holds the power and the reins of the mass media) will distort and twist the truth and convey an alternative image and message to the public.

Both of these aspects were present in Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) movement. The first component, which was that of armed uprising and revolution, was present up to the point of 'Āshūrā when the fighters were killed. After the fighters were killed, the second part was initiated by some of the survivors

---

[156] According to some scholars, the word Sar Jawn is an Arabicized form of his original name.

[157] -Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 22.
-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 199.

such as Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) and the Lady Zaynab (ʿa). Through their powerful and timely sermons, they delivered the message of the movement to the masses. When the masses began to hear the truth of what had happened, this proved to be a deadly blow to the government's reputation and their claims of legitimacy.

For many years, the Umayyid government had been busy with a widespread and extensive campaign of slander and lies against the family of the Prophet. This propaganda campaign had been particularly effective in Syria due to various political and social reasons. If the survivors of Imam Ḥusayn's movement had not engaged in awakening the masses and in spreading the true message of the movement, it is without a doubt that the truth would have been altered in the pages of history and shown in a greatly distorted form not just to the people of that era but to the people who were to come later, as well.

In the same manner that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was slandered and the history of his life distorted, the same phenomenon would have occurred to Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa). For example, some people have said that Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was not poisoned but that he died from the effects of tuberculosis. Others have said that he died of cancer. Yet the survivors, due to the unique situation that they were placed in, did not allow the same distortions and alterations to happen to Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) name.

The survivors of Imam Ḥusayn's (ʿa) movement were essential in ruining the name and reputation of the Umayyid government, as well as in awakening the masses against the Umayyids. In order to better understand the background of this situation, it is critical that we backtrack a bit and take a look at the history of Mūʿāwīya's government in Syria:

The Monarchical Rule of Mūʿāwīya in Syria

It is essential to understand that from the very first day that Syria was taken over by the Muslims, its leaders were

people such as Khālid ibn Walīd and Mū'āwīya ibn Abī Sufyān. The people of this land had neither heard the words of the Prophet (ṣ), nor had they seen the way of life of his companions. They didn't understand the religion the way that it was understood in the city of Medina.

While it is true that 113 of the Prophet's companions did end up taking residence in Syria (either during the time of the conquest, or gradually moving there during later times), historians have shown that the majority of these individuals had not been with the Prophet (ṣ) for very long and they hadn't narrated more than a few traditions from him. In addition, the majority of these companions died during the time of the caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and by the time Mū'āwīya had come into power, the vast majority had already passed away. During the time of Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) uprising, only 11 of these men were still alive. They were approximately 70 to 80 years in age and preferred to lead sequestered lifestyles and not mix with the people.

The results of these social conditions were that the youth who were about the same age as Yazīd, did not know much about true Islam. It is very possible that to the Syrian masses Islam was simply another government, much like the ones that they had had in the past. To the masses, the opulent lifestyle of rulers, the waste and theft of the public treasury, and the flaunting of extravagant ceremonies were normal occurrences which they were accustomed to. The jailing, torture, exile, and murder of political opponents was another ordinary occurrence. All of these things had been seen during past times and so the common people saw them as normal. The masses simply assumed that during the time of the Prophet (ṣ), things had been the same in the city of Medina as well.[158] In conclusion, the people of Syria believed that the actions and behavior of Mū'āwīya and his companions were simply business as usual in the history of Syria's rulers.

[158] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Rise of Ḥusayn (a), Tehran, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1359 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 185.

Mūʿāwīya ruled in Damascus for approximately 42 years. He spent 5 years ruling on the authority of the second caliph, and about 12 years on the authority of the third. He also remained governor for the 5 years of Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) rule, as well as 6 months during the caliphate of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). After his period of governorship, he also ruled as caliph for approximately 20 more years.[159]

Poisonous Propaganda

During his long tenure in power, Mūʿāwīya trained and educated the people in a way that dulled their intellects and their awareness of religion. He made the people submissive to his will and lacking in the ability to question his authority. During his long years of rule, Mūʿāwīya made people submissive to his authority in military and political matters; he also positioned himself so that whatever he taught as religion, the people accepted without questioning or reflecting over what had been taught to them. The people were made deaf, dumb, and blind in terms of religious thought and ideology.

Mūʿāwīya was also skilled in twisting religious traditions and sayings, and making them suit his own purposes in terms of strengthening his position and rule. For example, ʿAmmār Yāsir, who was a great companion of the Prophet (ṣ), died while fighting on Imam ʿAlī's (ʿa) side against Mūʿāwīya in Ṣiffīn. The Prophet (ṣ) had foretold that ʿAmmār would be killed by the oppressors. Mūʿāwīya attempted to distort this tradition's meaning by claiming that in reality, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was the oppressor because he had brought ʿAmmār to the battlefield. In this twisted way, Mūʿāwīya was trying to make it seem like the responsibility of his death was on Imam ʿAlī's shoulders because he was the cause of bringing him to the battlefield where he had been killed.[160]

---

[159] Āyatī, Dr. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Research on the History of ʿĀshūrā, Second Print, Tehran, The Ṣadūq Library, 1347 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 47.

[160] Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā Balādhūrī, Insāb al-Ashrāf, Beirut, Mu'asasah al-ʿAlamīya Lil

Through the use of such methods and conditioning techniques on the population, the Umayyid government turned the pure image of the family of the Prophet into something corrupt and impure. Contrary to this, they set themselves up as the true relatives of the Prophet. This went on to such a degree that historians have written:

"After the victory of the ʿAbbāsids and the strengthening of Abū al-ʿAbbās Saffāḥ's government, ten of the Emirs[161] of Syria went to him and swore an oath that until the time of the death of Marwān (the last Umayyid caliph), they had not known that the Prophet (ṣ) had any other relatives besides the Ummayids."[162]

In another piece of history, it is recorded that: "At the time when the surviving captives of ʿĀshūrā arrived in Damascus, a man stood up in front of Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) and said to him: 'I thank and praise God who killed and effaced you, and relieved our men of your evil, and made Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Yazīd) victorious over you.'

Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) stood silently until the man had said whatever he wished to say. When the man had finished, he asked him: 'Are you familiar with the Quran?' The man said: 'Yes.' The Imam (ʿa) then asked: Have you rea the verse that says: "Say: I do not ask you any reward for except the love of [my] relatives?"[163] The man replied in th affirmative. Then the Imam (ʿa) asked if he had read the verse that says: "Give the relatives their due right."[164] The man again replied in the affirmative. He then asked: How about this verse: "And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you members of the Family, and to make you pure

---

Maṭbūʿāt, 1394 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 317.

[161] Emīr's were local leaders similar to what a governor is during our time period.

[162] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1961 A.D., vol. 7, p. 159.

[163] Surah Shūrā, Verse 23.

[164] Surah Isrā, Verse 26.

and spotless." [165] Again, the man replied in the affirmative. Then Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) said to the man: 'Oh respected old man, these verses have been revealed for us. We are the 'Dhil Qurbā'; we are the 'Ahl al-Bayt' who have been purified from all pollution.'

The man realized that the things that he had heard about these captives had not been true; they were not 'foreigners' and in fact they were the descendants of the Prophet of God (ṣ). He became regretful of the words that he had spoken and he said the following: 'Oh Lord, I seek repentance from you for the hatred that I held for them. I turn away from the enemies of Muḥammad and his family.'"[166]

A Gift from the Journey of the Captives

Judging from the perspective of the extensive and negative propaganda that the Syrians had been exposed to for so many years, the importance of the journey of the captives to Syria becomes even more manifest. These survivors of 'Āshūrā ended up destroying over 40 years of extreme propaganda and showing the true face of the Umayyid government to the masses. These few individuals awakened the people of Syria and made them aware of the realities which they had been blinded to. This small group of survivors completed the second stage of Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) revolution, and they returned to Medina with victory on their hands rather than defeat.

In order to examine the victory of the survivors of 'Āshūrā in more detail, let us now take a look at some historical aspects of what took place during that time:

---

[165] Surah Ahzāb, Verse 33.

[166] Akhtab Khawārizmī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Researched by Shaykh Muḥammad Samawī, Qum, Maktabah Mufīd, vol. 2, p. 61.
- Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 74.

1- The Immunity of the Household of the Imam during the Tragedy of 'Ḥurrah'

After Imam Ḥusayn ('a) and his companions were martyred, news of the killings spread throughout the Muslim community. Bit by bit, cities such as Medina, along with other cities across the Muslim world, began to go into a state of shock and agitation. The governor of Medina decided to send a group of the city's notables to Damascus in order that they could see the young caliph from up close. In addition to seeing the caliph, they would be his special guests of honor and so the idea was that when they returned to their city, they would be happy at how they were treated and they would encourage people to obey their leader.

The truth of the matter, however, was that Yazīd had been brought up without proper training or education, and he completely lacked any foresight or wisdom. For this reason, he behaved in his usual manner in front of this group. He began to drink alcohol in front of them and he brought out his kennel of dogs[167] to play with. He also engaged in other behaviors which were considered to be sinful. When these representatives returned to Medina, they raised a big commotion and said to the people that: "Yazīd is an individual who drinks wine, plays with dogs, and is entirely corrupt; such a person cannot be the caliph and leader of the Muslims." Soon after, a rebellion broke out across the entire city and the Umayyid governor was kicked out, along with his entire family.

When news of this reached Yazīd in Syria, he sent a division of his army to Medina to crush the rebellion and named Muslim ibn 'Uqbah as its commander. Muslim surrounded the city and laid siege to it; as a result of the siege, the rebellion began to lose momentum and the people ended up surrendering.

---

[167] During that time period, playing with dogs was considered as something frivolous and sinful for a man of such a position.

When the people surrendered, Yazīd's army marched in and began to massacre the city's population; they left no evil deed undone during this period. No one was given any mercy, and people who were known as being the most pious were slaughtered with impunity. Women and young girls were raped at will.[168] This terrible tragedy has gone down in history by the name of 'The Tragedy of Ḥurrah.'

Yet, in the midst of this horrible tragedy, the household of Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn ('a) and the Banī Hāshim was saved from aggression. Alongside them, tens of other families were saved when they took refuge with them during the siege and the subsequent massacre. Ṭabarī has written: "When Yazīd sent Muslim ibn 'Uqbah to Medina he first told him: "Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) does not have anything to do with the rebels, so restrain yourself from him and act well towards him.'"[169]

Further, Shaykh Mufīd has written: "When Muslim ibn 'Uqbah entered the city of Medina, he sought Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a). When Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) came, Muslim seated him near himself and treated him with respect, saying: 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn has ordered me to act well in regards to you and to account for you separately than the others.' Then Muslim told the people around him: 'Bring my mule and saddle it.' Then he told the Imam ('a): 'Return to your family, for we may have scared them and inconvenienced you by your coming here. If we had anything with us, we would have given it to you since you are worthier and more deserving than us.'"[170]

For reasons that will be explained in the chapter on Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn's ('a) life, the Imam ('a) did not join the rebellion, and this was one of the reasons that Muslim treated

---

[168] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Rise of Ḥusayn (a), Tehran, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1359 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 170.

[169] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 7, p. 421.

[170] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 260.

him in this manner. Another reason was due to the wholesale slaughter which had taken place at Karbalā and the severe public pressure that the people had brought to bear on the Umayyid government. Due to this, Yazīd didn't wish to do anything which might cause more rebellions to take place. The Hashimites were therefore left alone during the course of this horrific event.

2- The Order of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān to Ḥajjāj

Ya'qūbī has written: "'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān wrote to Ḥajjāj, the governor of Ḥijāz: 'Do not ruin me by the murder of the children of Abū Ṭālib, for I saw with my own eyes that when the children of Ḥarb (Abū Sufyān) clashed with them, they were destroyed.'"[171]

From what is known about 'Abd al-Malik, he was one of the more intelligent and diplomatic rulers from amongst the Umayyids.[172] He became caliph around five years after the tragedy of Karbalā. This letter shows us that with all the pressure that the Umayyid clan put on the children of Abū Ṭālib, they were still unsuccessful in reaching their end goals. They only succeeded in blackening their name and inciting the anger of God and the people.

Destroying the Umayyid's Ideological Foundations

Power alone is not enough for an oppressive government to maintain its hold over the people. All governments are in need of an intellectual, philosophical, and doctrinal basis in order to keep their grip of power over their people. In other words, oppressive governments, in addition to needing military and police forces, have an equally important need for

---

[171] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Haydarīya, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 49. This matter has also been mentioned in Shaykh Mufīd's book al-Ikhtiṣāṣ (Irshād, Publications Office of Jāmi'ah' Mudarisīn, p. 215) as well as in Biḥār al-'Anwār (Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīya, vol. 42, p. 119).

[172] Ibn al-Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī Fī Ādāb al-Sulṭānīyah wa al-Dawl al-Islāmīya, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, p. 122.

psychological and intellectual influence, in order to make complete the process of subjugation. With these two elements, the people will become submissive and obedient to their government.

Naturally, if people are left with their powers of intellect and reason, and they recognize their government as being corrupt and self-serving in nature, then they would never submit to their authority. Therefore, the need for an ideological and intellectual backing becomes essential to the long-term survival of an oppressive ruler and his governmental apparatus. Whatever concepts rulers introduce as small ideas slowly gather momentum over time and eventually consolidate into actual worldviews, such as various religious sects and schools of philosophy.

The oppressive Umayyid government felt an acute need for such a philosophical, intellectual, and ideological backing. Since the society was an Islamic society, they had no choice but to cover their crimes and sins with religious rationalizations and justifications. In addition to this, they made use of certain ideas in order to stupefy the masses enough so that they could not fully recognize the reality of their government. It shouldn't be thought that the Umayyids were content to simply allow people to think whatever they liked; they were very interested in changing the public opinion to the point where the masses thought that the situation which they were in was the best possible situation, or at least an extremely good one.

Predestination as a Tool of Control

One of the traditional ways of dulling the thought process of the masses in order to make them submissive has been through the teaching of predestination. In history, typically the first line of defense for oppressive governments who wished to justify their actions was that of predestination. Effectively, this meant that they would relate everything back to the will of God, thereby placing the responsibility of their

actions upon God himself. It was very common for these governments to mention the phrase "It was God's will" when mentioning their various actions. They would also argue that if it was not "God's will," then it would have never taken place to begin with. The logic of predestination dictates that whatever has taken place is exactly what should have taken place, and whatever has not taken place is exactly that which could not have taken place.[173]

The Umayyids, much like other governments before them, took this idea of predestination and used it to put a choke hold on any potential dissension from the people. In order to further this goal, they gave their support to a group called the Jabrīyah. They also opposed the spread of another group called the Qadrīyah. The Qadrīyah was a group which believed in the free will and liberty of human beings in terms of their actions. They believed that whatever human beings did in their lives was due to the fact that they had chosen to do so out of their own complete free will. Since a person is free to choose their beliefs and complete their own actions, then the person is also responsible for these actions and beliefs. Therefore, liberty and freedom are concepts which necessarily entail responsibility.[174]

Since the Umayyids constantly feared opposition from amongst the masses, they considered the ideology of the Qadrīyah group as being a threat to their power. Therefore, they put the leaders of this group under pressure and simultaneously began to support the Jabrīyah group, who held completely opposite beliefs. This group preached to the people that the existence and actions of the Umayyid government, even when they engaged in corrupt and evil actions, was nothing but the will of God. They furthermore taught that the actions of the Ummayid rulers were not subject to change or transformation under any circumstances.

---

[173] Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā, The Epic Saga of Ḥusayn (a), First Edition, Tehran, Ṣadrā Publications, 1361 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 312-313.

[174] Amīn, Aḥmad, Fajr al-Islam, Cairo, Maktabah Nihḍat al-Miṣrīya, 1964 A.D., p. 284.

Therefore, opposition against the Umayyids was of no use whatsoever; it could even be considered as a sin since it went against God's will.

Mūʿāwīya supported this group in order that his own actions were justified as being divinely willed and there was no possibility of him being removed as the caliph. Even if Mūʿāwīya engaged in sinful actions and various forms of corruption, since he was the caliph of the Muslims, he could not be removed and his position and status were, in a sense, untouchable. In this way, this concept of predestination became the thickest cover which concealed Mūʿāwīya and his actions from the criticism of the masses and gave him a screen of legitimacy.[175]

Benefiting from the Media

In order to establish the Jabrīyah school of thought, Mūʿāwīya and his governors used the medium of poetry in order to indoctrinate the masses. During that time period, poetry held a high place in Arab society and was considered as the highest form of literature and art. This was one of the reasons why the Holy Quran was revealed as the final messenger's miracle. Mūʿāwīya, along with later Umayyid caliphs, used poetry in order to expand the concept of predestination and the concept of divine will that accompanied it. These poems gained currency among the masses and became part of the society's social consciousness, effectively closing the doors for any dissent or rebellion amongst the people.

Lady Zaynab at the Palace of Ibn Zīyād

After the tragedy of Karbalā, Yazīd's agents began to use the Jabrīyah ideology and they publicized the Umayyids'

---

[175] Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Mahdī, Assessment of the Husseini Revolution (Thawrat al-Ḥusayn), Translation by Mahdī Pīshvā'ī, Second Print, Qum, Tawhīd Publications, p. 135-137.

apparent victory against Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) as being the will of God. To these ends, ʿUbaydullah ibn Zīyād gathered the people at Kūfah's main mosque so that he could announce what had taken place. He gave himself an aura of religiosity and began to say to the people: "I praise God who made the truth victorious and aided Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Yazīd) and his companions, and killed the liar, the son of the liar."[176]

Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the Lady Zaynab (ʿa) were very aware of what Ibn Zīyād was trying to achieve and quickly worked to counteract him. They began to speak, holding Yazīd and his companions as responsible for their criminal actions.

Lady Zaynab (ʿa), while wearing the worst of her clothing and surrounded by her servants and the women of her family, quietly came into the gathering that was being held and sat down in a corner. ʿUbaydullah saw her and asked: "Who is this woman who has entered and is surrounded by these other women?" Zaynab (ʿa) did not answer him. ʿUbaydullah agai repeated himself. One of the servants then replied: "She Zaynab the daughter of Fāṭimah (ʿa), who is the daughter o the Prophet of Islam (ṣ)." ʿUbaydullah then faced her and said: "I praise God who disgraced your family, killed them, and showed that what you said were all lies."

Zaynab (ʿa) answered him with these words: "I praise God who holds us honorable through the medium of his Prophet (ṣ) (who is from our family) and who kept us clean from corruption. No one besides a corrupt person can be disgraced, and no one but an evil doer will lie; we are not of the evil doers, but others are. (referring to Ibn Ziyād and his followers). And all praise is due to God."[177]

Ibn Zīyād then said: "Did you see what God did with your

---

[176] Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Mahdī, Assessment of the Husseini (a) Revolution (Thawrat al-Ḥusayn), Translation by Mahdī Pīshvā'ī, Second Print, Qum, Tawhīd Publications, p. 137-140.

[177] Shaykh Mufīd, al-'Irshād, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 244.

family?" Zaynab ('a) replied: "I saw nothing but beauty. They were people whom God had destined to be killed and they obeyed him and went towards their resting place. Soon you and the ones around you will have to face God (on the Day of Judgment) and they will complain against you and ask God for his justice. Then, tell me who will be victorious on that day; may your mother grieve for you, oh son of Marjānah."

Ibn Zīyād became angry at Zaynab's straightforward and biting remarks; he was further incensed with the mention of his ill-reputed grandmother Marjānah. He began to think of taking action against her and having her harmed. However, one of the individuals there by the name of 'Amr ibn Ḥārith, said to Ibn Zīyād: "Commander, this is a woman and no one brings a woman to account for her words."

Ibn Zīyād once again addressed Zaynab ('a) and said: "God cooled my heart by the killing of your mutinous brother Ḥusayn and the rest of your rebellious family." Zaynab ('a) replied: "I swear by my life that you killed my elder, you cut the tree of my life, and you tore up my roots. If this is a cause for your healing, then may you have found your cure." Ibn Zīyād, who was affected by these words, responded with anger and derision. He said: "This here is just like her father, a giver of sermons; I swear by my life that your father was a poet and he would give speeches with rhythm and prose." Zaynab ('a) replied by saying: "Is now a time for poetry?"[178]

Ibn Zīyād wanted to show that whoever is outwardly defeated on a military battlefield has become disgraced, and if someone is on the path of truth, they would never be defeated. Zaynab ('a) knew what Ibn Zīyād was trying to do and so she quickly neutralized his words and disgraced him in front of the people. With her words, she showed that the measure of honor and righteousness is found in the search for truth, not the mere possession of external power.

'Ubaydullah ibn Zīyād expected Zaynab ('a) to act

---

[178] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 68.

submissively and meekly in front of him since she had just seen her nearest and dearest of family members slaughtered before her. He expected tears, weakness, and entreaties. Yet Zaynab ('a) showed him no signs of weakness, and made him choke on the words that he had spoken, breaking his arrogance and conceit.

Truthfully, when has history ever witnessed such an individual like Zaynab ('a)? This was a lady who had just witnessed a massacre of enormous proportions. She had seen six or seven of her brothers killed, along with one of her own children and 10 of her nephews. In addition, she and all of her sisters and nephews had been taken as captives. In spite of this heartrending condition, she was still exceedingly capable of defending the religion and spreading the word of what had taken place at Karbala. She further explained that if the Imam ('a) and his companions had been martyred, then they had come for that very purpose, and if anything had taken place other than that, then that would have been a cause of worry and anxiety for them. She explained that the fighters of Karbalā had done their godly duties well, and they had gained the honor and glory of martyrdom. She then asked if ther was room for anything else besides praising and thanking Go for this success and grace.[179]

Lady Zaynab's Sermon at Kūfah

At this point, Zaynab ('a) was in the city of Kūfah, and Kūfah had many points of difference with the city of Damascus. Kūfah was a city which had been the center of Imam 'Alī's rule only 20 years before. The people who lived there were seekers of freedom and a just Islamic government, as well as supporters of the Prophet's family. In spite of these positive attributes, they weren't willing to pay the price for gaining these freedoms and blessings. They wished a life full

[179] Dr. Āyātī Bīrjandī, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Research on the History of 'Āshūrā, Second Print, Tehran, Ṣadūq Library, 1347 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 203.

of material wealth, power, and freedom from oppressors, yet when the hour of action would come; they weren't willing to stand up for their rights. If they came under pressure, or their material well-being was at stake, they would quickly back down. They were attributed as being two sided and fickle. On one hand, they invited the son of the Prophet with enthusiasm and emotion, but on the other hand, when they were put under pressure, they not only quickly forgot their pledges and promises, but they also went ahead and killed the very same people whom they had invited. Such people who have these attributes must be awakened from their slumber. They must be made aware of their mistakes and shown exactly what they did to themselves with the murder of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa).

This responsibility of awakening the masses (from the side of the women) fell mostly on Lady Zaynab (ʿa). The women in the city of Kūfah who were above 30 years in age had seen Zaynab (ʿa) 20 years ago when her father had been the caliph. They knew how much Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) respected and honored her, and they also had witnessed how their own fathers and husbands honored and respected her. Zaynab (ʿa) was a familiar figure to them, and when they saw the moving scene of the captives of the army of Yazīd, many long faded memories came vividly back to life for them. Zaynab (ʿa) used this opportunity and began to speak. The people heard a voice that sounded familiar to them; it seemed to them that it was Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) himself who was speaking at that moment.

Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir, who is more famously known as Ibn Ṭayfūr (d. 280 Hijrī), is the author of a book called Balāghāt al-Nisā'. This book contains a compilation of famous and eloquent speeches by Arab and Muslim women, and it is considered a classical text. In this book, he has narrated that: Khadīm Asadī[180] has said: "In the year 61 Hijrī, which was the year of the murder of Ḥusayn (ʿa), I entered Kūfah. I saw the women of Kūfah crying profusely in grief. I saw ʿAlī ibn al-

[180] In the book Luhūf, the narrator of the sermon has been mentioned as being Bashīr ibn Khazīm Asadī. He has also been mentioned in the book Balāghāt al-Nisā'.

Ḥusayn (ʿa) who was weakened by illness. ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) raised his head and said: 'Oh People of Kūfah, do you cry for us? Was it anyone but yourselves who killed us?'

At this time, Umm Kulthūm[181] signaled to the people to be quiet, and at this, they all became silent. Then she began to speak and I have not seen a modest lady speak more eloquently than her; it was as if she was speaking with the tongue of ʿAlī (ʿa). Her speech went like this: 'Oh people of Kūfah! Oh people of deceit and treachery! May your eyes never be free from tears! May your wails never stop! You are like women who weave what they have and then when finished break it apart. Neither your covenants are of value, nor your oaths trustworthy. What do you have besides boasting and self-praise? What do you have besides flattery in the open and making amends with the enemy in private? You resemble a green, wet, and fresh plant, which is growing on a pile of dung... What evil provisions you people have gathered for the next world! May God's wrath and the punishment of the Hellfire be upon you. Do you cry? Yes, by God you should cry, for you are worthy of crying. (You should) cry more and laugh less.

Why should you not cry, when you have gained such a disgrace for yourselves. This is a disgrace that cannot be washed off with any amount of water. What disgrace is worse than the killing of the son of the Prophet and the 'Master of the Youth of Paradise'? A man who was the light of your way and your helper on the 'Day of Darkness'. May you perish! May you be ashamed! All at once, you put to waste all of your past (actions), and you gained nothing for your future from it. Henceforth, you must live in abjectness and disgrace for you have gained God's wrath for yourselves. You have done something where the sky is about to fall upon the earth, and the earth is about to split, and the mountains are about to fall on one another.

---

[181] Usually, whenever Umm Kulthūm is mentioned directly, it refers to Zaynab Kubrā (a), the elder daughter of Imam ʿAlī (a).

Do you know whose blood you have spilt? Do you know who these women and girls are, who have been brought into the streets and into the markets without their coverings? Do you know that you have broken the heart of the Messenger of God (ṣ)? What an evil and stupid thing you have done? The disgrace of your actions has reached every corner of this earth. Are you surprised that drops of blood are falling from the sky onto the earth? Yet know that the misery of the torment of the Day of Judgment will be more severe and more difficult. If God does not seize you at this very moment for your sins, do not feel at ease, for God does not punish immediately. At the same time, he does not leave the blood of innocents without punishment; God takes account of all things.'

These words which were spoken from the heart and were the consequences of faith in God, moved everyone who was there and created a great feeling of remorse. In the midst of this sorrowful scene, a man from the tribe of Banī Ja'fī, whose beard had become soaked with his tears, began to recite a poem which said: 'The sons of this family are the best of sons, and on this family there was never the least stains of disgrace or abjectness."[182]

Lady Zaynab in the Palace of Yazīd

Yazīd ordered that the captives, along with the heads of the martyrs, be sent to Syria. Ibn Zīyād's government agents, who were ill-tempered and harsh, began to head in that direction. Yazīd's court waited anxiously for the caravan to arrive, as they considered it a sign of great victory and triumph. According to historians, the caravan of captives entered the city, where thousands of spectators had assembled. The city of Damascus overflowed with joy and high spirits on that day since they were celebrating the victory of Yazīd. The caravan advanced street by street and was escorted into Yazīd's opulent

[182] Balāghāt al-Nisā', Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 24.
- Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Rise of Ḥusayn (a), Tehran, The Office of Cultural Islamic Publications, 1359 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 182.

palace. All of the court officials were sitting in their special places; Yazīd had placed himself on the top of his throne, and was sitting with complete arrogance. All of them were waiting in anticipation of the captives.

There was one major difference between Yazīd's gathering and that of 'Ubaydullahs; Yazīd had only allowed the notables of the city, the tribal chiefs, as well as foreign representatives to be present, whereas in 'Ubaydullah's gathering, everyone had been allowed entrance. Owing to this difference, Yazīd's gathering had more potential effect, due to the many important individuals who were present.

The captives entered the palace and sat down in an area which had been prepared for them. When Yazīd's eye fell on the captives, he saw them standing before him, so he ordered the head of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to be brought in a basin. When the basin was placed in front of his throne, he began to hit Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) teeth with a stick that was in his hand, and he began to recite verses of a poem, saying: "How I wish my elders, who were present in the battle of Badr and felt the bite of the arrows of the Khazraj, were here today and would feel joyous, saying: Oh Yazīd, well done. You have gotten our revenge for the day of Badr from the family of 'Alī ('a)..."

The Defiance of Lady Zaynab

If the gathering of Yazīd had concluded at this point, Yazīd would have been the victor and his actions would not have been considered as being too evil by the assembly. Zaynab ('a), however, did not allow the meeting to end on such a note. She turned what Yazīd had initially considered a victory into a bitter disgrace and defeat. She showed the people who were assembled that the very same people in front of Yazīd were the daughters of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ); this was the very same Prophet (ṣ) whom Yazīd claimed to rule on behalf of. Zaynab ('a) began to speak with courage and power, and she said the following words to Yazīd: "God and his Messenger (ṣ) have spoken the truth when they said: 'The end

of those who do evil is that they hold the signs of God to be as lies and they mock and ridicule them.'

Yazīd! Do you think because you have constricted the earth and skies around us and because you have ordered that we be made prisoners and taken from one city to another, that we have become abject and you have become great? Judging from your arrogance and conceit, do you think you have become higher in stature due to what you have done? When you see your power and kingship before you, you become so happy that your body can barely contain you, but don't you know that this opportunity which has been given to you is so that your nature is made manifest to all? Have you really forgotten the words of God when he says: 'The disbelievers think that the time they are given (on earth) is of benefit to them; We give them opportunity so that their load of sins increase; Then they will reach a torment that is a cause for abjectness and disgrace.'

Oh son of the freed ones,[183] is this justice that your wives, daughters, and servants are sitting in the seats of honor, while you have enslaved the daughters of the Prophet, disrespected them, stifled their cries, and allowed strangers to take them from one city to another on the backs of camels? All this, while no one has given them sanctuary, nor cared to see what state they are in, nor with any of their guardians from among their men present to accompany them? People gather from all around to look and stare at them.

Yet what can be expected from one whose heart is filed with animosity towards us? You are saying that you wish that your forefathers, who were killed in the 'Battle of Badr', were here right now, and then you proceed to hit the teeth of the son of the Prophet with a stick? Does it not occur to you that you have incurred a great sin and acted with disgrace? Why should

---

[183] When the Prophet (s) took over the city of Mecca, the tribal heads and the notables of the city, with Abū Sufyān (Yazīd's grandfather) at their head, were fearful that they would be punished for their past deeds. The Prophet (s) told them: Go, for you are free. Zaynab (a), in her famous speech, pointed out this momentous event for the grandfather of Yazīd.

you not? By shedding the blood of the children of the Prophet and the family of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who were shining stars from amongst the people of the earth, you have renewed the enmity of the two families. Do not be joyous, for you will soon be positioned in front of God's presence, and this is when you will wish that you were both blind and dumb and that you had not seen this day, and that you had not said: 'If my forefathers were present in this gathering, they would not be able to contain their joy.' Oh Lord, you yourself give us our rights and take our revenge from the one who has oppressed us!

By God, you hurt and damaged yourself (with these actions). On the day when the Messenger and his family sit in the shade of the mercy of God, you will stand by him in great wretchedness. That day is a day, in which God will fulfil his promise, and these oppressed individuals, who are lying in their own blood, will all be gathered together. God says: 'Do not suppose that those who are killed in the way of God are dead; No they are alive and receiving sustenance from their Lord...' Yazīd, oh enemy of God and son of the enemy of God! I swear by God that in my view, you are not worthy of rebuke, and you are lesser than to be ridiculed. Yet, what can I do, for my eyes are filled with tears and my chest is full of pain.

After Ḥusayn ('a) was killed, the 'Party of Satan' took us from Kūfah to the 'Royal Court of the Foolish', in order that, through breaking the reverence of the family of Muḥammad (ṣ), they may reap their reward from the treasury of the Muslims. After the hands of these executioners has been colored with our blood, and their mouths are filled with pieces of our meat, and after the wild wolves have run around those pure bodies, what pain will your reprimand and criticism cure?

If you think that by killing and taking us as prisoners, you have gained advantage and benefit, then you shall soon see that what you thought to be to your benefit was in fact to your

detriment. On that day (the Day of Judgment), you will see the results of what you have done. On that day, you will ask help from the son of Zīyād, and he will ask for help from you. You and your followers will be gathered next to the measure of divine justice. On that day, you will know that the best provisions which Mū'āwīya prepared for you was that you killed the children of the Prophet.

I swear by God that I only fear him and I will only complain to him. Do whatever you wish! Enact whichever trick you are capable of! Bring forth every enemy that you can muster. By God, this disgrace that you have brought upon yourself can never be erased. I thank God that he made the life of the 'Masters of the Youth of Paradise' to end well and that he made paradise obligatory upon them. I ask God that he bestows upon them a high rank and that he spreads his mercy even more upon them for he is a guardian and helper most able and most powerful.'[184]

When Zaynab ('a) finished, a deathly silence hung over the palace and Yazīd began to see the signs of anger and displeasure on the faces of the people. In order to placate them, he could only manage to muster up these words: 'May God destroy the son of Marjānah, I did not want Ḥusayn to be killed...'"[185]

The Fourth Imam and the Propaganda War

In order to remove wretchedness and virtual slavery from the society, and to allow people to regain their freedom and honor, there was no option but to create awareness in the people. When people are made aware of the true reality, then the grounds of revolution are sown against tyranny and oppression.

The people had to be awakened and shown the reality, in

---

[184] Ibn Abī Ṭayfūr, Ibid, p. 12-23.

[185] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Rise of Ḥusayn (a), Tehran, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1359 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 187-189, with slight differences in order and words.

order to feel responsible for the state which they were in, and to rise up against the oppressive powers that had just slaughtered the family of the Prophet. If they were given this understanding, then a revolution would invariably take form.

It was only through this type of struggle that the effects of the decades long propaganda campaign of the Umayyids could be uprooted. For this reason, the Imam (ʿa) would use every opportunity he had in order to educate the people about the reality of Islam and the reality of those who were ruling over them in the name of religion.

At one point, the Imam (ʿa) saw that a crowd had gathered to see the prisoners. He indicated to them to become quiet, and everyone became completely silent. After praising and thanking God the Almighty, the Imam (ʿa) began to speak; he said: "Oh people! Those who know me, know me, and for those who do not, I will introduce myself. I am ʿAlī, the son of Ḥusayn, the son of Abī Ṭālib. I am the son of he, whose sanctity was encroached upon, and whose wealth and possessions were plundered...and whose family was taken as prisoner.

I am the son of he, who was beheaded by the river Furā while he had neither oppressed anyone, nor engaged in any trickery towards anyone. I am the son of he, who was beheaded and this is an honor most high and great. Oh people, did you not write letters to my father? Did you not give your pledge to him? Did you not make a covenant with him? Did you not commit treason against him? Did you not go into battle against him? What evil actions! And what evil thoughts and deeds! If the Messenger of God (ṣ) tells you: You killed my children, and you encroached upon my honor— You are not of my Ummah! How will you bear to look at him?"

These short but powerful words created a firestorm of emotion and penetrated deep into the hearts of the people of Kūfah. The sounds of wailing and crying began to rise from every corner. People were saying to one another: 'We have destroyed ourselves but we do not yet realize.'

'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) said: "May God bless the one who accepts my counsel and who hears what I have to say... Our lifestyle should be like the lifestyle of the Prophet (ṣ), which is the best of all lifestyles. Everyone said: 'Oh son of the Prophet (ṣ), we will listen; give orders and we will be faithful. We will not break away from you. We will fight with whomever you tell us and make peace with whomever you tell us. We will capture Yazīd and we are averse to the oppressors.' 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) said: Alas, oh deceitful people. Do you wish to do with me what you did with my father and grandfather? No, by God the injury that you have done me is still raw and bleeding, and my chest is burning with the pain of the death of my father and brothers. The bitterness of this grief cannot be soothed and I want that you neither be with us nor against us."[186]

The Exchange of Words between Imam Sajjād and the Son of Zīyād

As explained previously, the Umayyid government used the ideology of predestination in order to ascribe all of its crimes to the will of God. Through such means, it eventually succeeded in stupefying the masses into submission. Yet, Imam Sajjād ('a) and Zaynab ('a) were aware of this ideological tool, and they used the means at their disposal to fight against it. One clear example of this is the clash of words between Imam Sajjād ('a) and Ibn Zīyād in Kūfah.

After the prisoners had been brought into the general gathering at the palace of Ibn Zīyād, and sharp words were exchanged between him and the Lady Zaynab ('a), Ibn Zīyād

---

[186] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Dāwarī, p. 66.
- Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Life of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), Tehran, First Edition, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1365 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 56.
- Ḥasani, 'Alī Akbar, The Fourth Imam, the Guardian of the Bloody Revolution of Karbalā, Qum, Young Generation Publications, p. 38-40.
* There is the possibility that this sermon was delivered on the return of the Ahl al-Bayt from Syria in the city of Kūfah. The reasons behind this is that this is a lengthy sermon, and when they were taken to Syria, there was no time or opportunity to deliver such a speech.

became aware of ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's presence. He said: "Who is this?" Some of those who were present said: "It is ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa)." He said: "Did God not kill ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa)?" The Imam replied: "I had a brother who was called ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, and the people killed him." Ibn Zīyād replied: "No, God killed him." The Imam (ʿa) replied with this verse of the Quran: "It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep."[187] Ibn Zīyād said: "With what impudence you answer me? Take him and cut off his head."

At this, Zaynab (ʿa) said: "Oh Son of Zīyād, you have not left any of our men alive. If you want to kill him, then kill me along with him." Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) said: "Oh my aunt, please be quiet so that I can speak with him." Then he said: "Oh son of Zīyād, do you try to frighten me with fear of death? Do you not know that being killed is an ordinary affair for us, and martyrdom is a greatness for us?"[188] In this exchange, Ibn Zīyād wanted to show that it had been God who had killed Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) but Imam Sajjād (ʿa) quickly proved that there is a difference between the actions of the people (such as when they killed the Imam (ʿa)) and how God takes the souls at the time of death.

The Sermon of Imam Sajjād in Syria

When we look at the journey of the survivors of Karbalā to Syria, it becomes clear that these survivors played a fundamental role in spreading the message of Imam Ḥusayn's revolution. They also played a pivotal role in exposing the corrupt nature of the Umayyid government. This group in actuality took on the same function as prisoners that Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) took on by rising up and fighting against the oppressors. When the prisoners stopped in Syria, it gave them a good opportunity to raise awareness amongst the masses

[187] Surah Zumar, Verse 42

[188] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 68.

about Islam and the family of the Prophet. This spreading of knowledge began to counteract around forty years of Umayyid propaganda and influence.

Imam Sajjād's ('a) famous sermon was delivered on one of the days that the Ahl al-Bayt were in Syria and it ended up playing a vital role in their mission. The result of this sermon was the complete and utter disgrace of Yazīd in front of the masses, as well as in front of the notables of his society. The late 'Allāmah Majlisī has narrated from the author of Manaqib that: "It has been narrated that one day, Yazīd ordered that a pulpit be erected so that a speaker could mount it and begin denouncing Imam Ḥusayn ('a) and Imam 'Alī ('a).

The speaker mounted the pulpit, and after praising and thanking God, he spoke many words against Imam 'Alī ('a) and Imam Ḥusayn ('a); then he eloquently began praising Yazīd and Mū'āwīya, and spoke of their goodness and virtue. Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) (who was present in the gathering) interjected and said: 'Woe upon you, oh speaker! You have bought the pleasure of the created with the wrath of the creator; and you have prepared a place for yourself in the fire of hell.'"

Then he continued and said: "Yazīd, do you allow me to go upon this pulpit and speak words wherein lie the pleasure of God, and which will count as a good deed for the listeners?" Yazīd did not give permission. The people began to say: "Oh leader, why not give permission for him to take the pulpit and let us see what he has to say?" Yazīd said: "If he ascends this pulpit, he will not descend until me and my family are disgraced." Someone said: "Oh leader, what can this young prisoner possibly know and what can he possibly say?" Yazīd said: "He is of a family who take in knowledge as young children alongside the milk that they suckle, until it becomes a part of their very blood and body."

Yet the people kept insisting until Yazīd was compelled to grant his permission. At this point, Imam Sajjād ('a) went and

positioned himself on the peak of the pulpit. He first began by praising and thanking God, and then proceeded to deliver a sermon which caused the listeners to begin crying profusely and their hearts to be shaken to the very core.

The Imam ('a) said: "Oh people, God has granted upon us (the family of the Prophet) six distinctions, and he has given us priority over others with seven virtues. The six distinctions are that God has given us: knowledge, forbearance, generosity, eloquence, courage, and he has placed our love in the hearts of the pious believers. Our seven virtues are that: the Chosen Messenger (ṣ) is from us, the Siddīq ('Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a)) is from us, Ja'far Ṭayyār is from us, The Lion of God and his Messenger (ṣ) (Ḥamzah, the master of martyrs) is from us, the two 'Sibṭs[189]' of this nation, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are from us, and the Lady Zahrā ('a) (or according to some narrations 'the Mahdī ('a)') is from us."[190]

"Oh people, whoever knows us, knows us; and whoever does not know us, let me introduce ourselves: I am the son c Mecca and Minā, I am the son of Zamzam and Safā, I am tl offspring of that great one who lifted the Black Stone with h. 'Abā (cloak),[191] I am the offspring of the greatest person who put on the Ihrām and circumambulated the Kaaba and performed the Sa'ī. I am the offspring of the best of human beings. I am the offspring of he, who (during the Night of Ascent) was taken from the Masjid al-Ḥarām to the Masjid al-Aqṣā. I am the son of he, who reached Sidrat al-Muntahā, I am the son of he, who in his celestial travels, came so near to the reality that he was given the title of 'Qāb Qawsayn Aw Adnā'. I am the son of he, who prayed with the angels of the sky. I am the son of he, who was subject to God's revelation. I am the son of Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā, I am the son of 'Alī al-

[189] The word Sibṭ literally means grandsons.

[190] Some historians, who have narrated this sermon of Imam Sajjād (a) with a slight difference in wording, have not mentioned the seventh virtue.

[191] This refers to the story of how the 'Black Stone' was lifted into its place through the medium of the Prophet (s). He was 35 years of age when this took place and he prevented conflict and discord from breaking out amongst the people of Mecca.

Murtaḍā. I am the son of he who fought with the polytheists, until they submitted to 'Lā Illāha Illallāh'.[192] I am the son of he who fought under the Prophet of God (ṣ) with two swords and two spears,[193] who emigrated twice,[194] who gave his pledge to the Prophet (ṣ) twice, fought bravely in the battles of Badr and Ḥunayn, and did not disbelieve in God for even a moment. I am the son of he, who is the best of the pious, the inheritor of the prophets, the destroyer of the disbelievers, the leader of the Muslims, the light of the fighters in the way of God, the adornment of the worshipers, the pride of the ones who cry (from the fear of God), the most patient of the patient ones, and the best of the ones who rise from the family of Yāsīn, the one sent by God.

My father is he whose supporter was Gabriel, his helper Michael, and he himself was the defender and guard over the honor of the Muslims. He was the one who fought against the Māriqīn, the Nākithīn, the Qāsiṭīn, and the spiteful enemies of God. I am the son of the best individual of the Quraysh, who attached himself to the Prophet (ṣ) before anyone else and preceded everyone in his Islam.[195] He was the adversary of the rebels, the destroyer of the polytheists, the divine arrow in annihilating the hypocrites, the source of the wisdom of the worshippers, the supporter of God's religion, the Walī Amr of God, the garden of divine wisdom, and the heart of divine knowledge..."

Then he said: "I am the son of Fāṭimah Zahrā ('a), I am the

---

[192] The slogan of 'There is no God but Allah'

[193] This is perhaps a reference to the breaking of Imam 'Alī's (a) sword in the Battle of Uhud, where it is narrated that he was given the sword of 'Dhū al-Fiqār' from God.

[194] In regards to the two emigrations of Imam 'Alī (a), there exist a few possibilities: A- Emigrating from Mecca to Medina during the time of Islam, and then emigrating a second time from there to Yemen during the last years of the Prophet's (s) life, in order to educate and guide the people of that land. B- Emigrating from Mecca to Medina and then, emigrating from there to Kūfah (after the passing of the Prophet (s), during the period of his caliphate). C- Emigrating from Mecca to an area called 'Shib Abī Ṭālib' (this was 3 years in duration) and then onwards from there to Medina. (Ḥasanī, 'Alī Akbar, The 4th Imam (a), The Guardian of the Bloody Revolution of Karbalā, Qum, Young Generation Publications, p. 66).

[195] He was the first to accept Islam.

son of the leader of all women..."

Here Imam Sajjād ('a) began to introduce his family tree of imamate and prophethood. The people in the gathering had begun to cry and wail from the effect of his words. Yazīd became fearful that a riot would erupt, and so he ordered the call to prayer to be recited. The reciter stood up and began the call to prayer, saying: God is the greatest....

The Imam ('a) said: "Truly, nothing is greater than God." When the reciter announced: "I witness that there is no God but Allah," the Imam ('a) said: "Truly, my skin, my hair, my flesh, and my blood all testify to the oneness of God." As soon as the reciter announced: "I witness that Muḥammad (ṣ) is the Messenger of Allah," the Imam ('a) faced Yazīd from the pulpit and said: "Yazīd, is Muḥammad (ṣ) my grandfather or yours? If you say he is yours, then you have lied and disowned the truth, and if you say that he is my grandfather, then why did you kill our children...?"[196]

Ṭabarī, one of the scholars of the 7th century Hijrī ha written at the end of Imam Sajjād's ('a) speech that: "... (Imar Sajjād ('a)) said: 'Oh Yazīd, was the honored and respecte Prophet (ṣ) your grandfather or mine? If you say that he was your grandfather, then the people of this earth know that you are lying, and if you say that he was my grandfather, then why did you martyr my father without fault, plunder his wealth and possessions, and take his family as captives?'"

Imam Sajjād ('a) said this, tore his clothes, and began to cry. He then continued to speak: "By God, if there is no one else on this earth whose grandfather was the Messenger (ṣ), then why did this man kill my father unjustly, and bring us as they bring the slaves of Rome?" Then he said: "Oh Yazīd, you did this and you say that Muḥammad is the messenger of God (ṣ), and you turn towards the Qiblah (to pray)? Woe upon you, may my father and my grandfather be your adversaries on the

[196] Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1393 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 45, p. 137. Some portions of this speech have not been included; they are referenced with the proper grammatical notations.

Day of Judgment."

At this point, Yazīd cursed at the reciter of the call to prayer and ordered him to finish. A great commotion and pandemonium swept through the gathering and the people began to disperse, some having prayed, while others simply left without praying.'[197]

The Message and the Consequences of Karbalā

The movement and uprising of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) brought about widespread effects and consequences in the Muslim society. Let us take a look at some of these:

1- The Disgrace of the Umayyid Government

The Umayyids had traditionally presented themselves in the garb of religion, and they ruled in the name of Islam and the Muslims. They would use various tricks, such as the fabrication of traditions which were ascribed to the Prophet (ṣ) and his companions, in order to give themselves further religious legitimacy. They would also co-opt poets to write poetry praising them and they would strengthen the various sects who believed in predestination in order to push the idea of themselves as being divinely appointed rulers who could not be questioned or resisted.

The killing of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was one of the biggest blows to the Umayyid government in this respect and it disgraced the whole apparatus of their government. The actions of the government, such as cutting off water to the Imam's camp, the killing of young children, and the taking of captives from among the women and children of the Prophet's family all struck a powerful blow against all of their claims of religiosity and divine will. Their reputation changed amongst the masses and people began to look at them with hatred and animosity. The situation changed so strikingly that Mujahid, one of the eminent personalities of the day, is

[197] Kāmil Bahā'ī, Tehran, Maktab Murtaḍawī, p. 301.

reported as having said: "I swear by God that the people are publicly cursing Yazīd and speaking ill of him. They consider him as disgraceful and have turned away from him."[198]

Yazīd, who had been joyous in celebrating his victory and in his killing of Imam Ḥusayn ('a), was now being forced to blame 'Ubaydullah ibn Zīyād for what had taken place. The tide had turned and he had lost control over the situation. Historians have written that: After the events of Karbalā, Yazīd invited 'Ubaydullah to Damascus, and gave him large amounts of wealth and valuable gifts. He sat 'Ubaydullah near himself and raised him in rank and status. He also introduced him to his wives at his harem and appointed him as his close counselor and friend...[199] However, not much time had passed when the power of public opinion reached its peak, and Yazīd was forced to do an abrupt about-face and absolve himself of any guilt. He instead blamed Ibn Zīyād for everything that had happened.

Ibn Athīr has written: "When they took the head of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) to Yazīd, the position of Ibn Zīyād was raised in his eyes and he became happy with what he had done. H ended up awarding Ibn Zīyād with many presents. Howeve not much time had passed before Yazīd received word that tl people had become angry with him and were cursing and speaking ill of him. When he realized what was taking place, he became rueful of his actions. He began to say: 'I wish that I had endured and brought Ḥusayn to my house, for the sake of the Prophet of Islam and the sanctity of Ḥusayn's connection with him. I wish I had given the choice over to him, however much it may have caused the weakening of my government. May God curse the son of Marjānah (Ibn Zīyād). He forced Ḥusayn in this matter while Ḥusayn had requested from him permission to give me his pledge in person or to go

[198] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 262.

[199] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 290.

to one of the frontier areas.[200] Yet the son of Marjānah murdered him without agreeing to his suggestion, and with this action, he made me the focus of the Muslim's hatred and anger and sowed the seeds of enmity in their hearts towards me. Now people from both the high and low levels of society have become my enemy. What sort of a predicament is this which the son of Marjānah put me in? May God curse him and place him under his torment."

In respect to his treatment of the survivors of Karbalā, Yazīd was initially very harsh towards them, but soon, under the pressure of public opinion, he was forced to change his manner of treatment. When the captives first arrived, he acted with arrogance and roughness towards them, and ordered that they be housed in a dilapidated and ruined structure which had been a home at one time. Soon, with the changing tide of public opinion and the emotions of the masses, he was forced to act towards them with kindness and changed their place of residence, saying: If you are so inclined, I will send you to

---

[200] This part was added in by either Yazīd or the historians, because Imam Ḥusayn (a) was never prepared to give the oath of allegiance to Yazīd. In fact, the entire movement of 'Āshūrā, from the very beginning, until the very end, was one of rejecting the oath of allegiance to a corrupt ruler like Yazīd and all those who were like him.

- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 87. This situation has been mentioned in brief by both Ṭabarī in his history (Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 266) and by Sibṭ ibn Jawzī in his Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ (Najaf Print, al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 261 and 265).

After some time had passed, even Ibn Zīyād become worried about the consequences of the crimes that he had committed at Karbalā. His testimony of this lies in an exchange of words which took place between him and 'Umar ibn Sa'ad. Ṭabarī and Abī Mikhnaf have narrated this exchange as follows: After the killing of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (a), 'Ubaydullah ibn Zīyād told 'Umar ibn Sa'ad: Where is the written (order) that I had given to you in regards to killing Ḥusayn? 'Umar ibn Sa'ad said: I went to fulfil your orders and it was lost. Ibn Zīyād said: You must bring that to me. 'Umar said: It has been lost. Ibn Zīyād replied: I swear by God you must bring me that letter. His answer was: I have kept it in Medina so that I may show it to the old women as an excuse and pretext. I have done you a favor and a service so great that if I had done it for my father Sa'ad Waqqās, it would have fulfilled his rights of fatherhood over me. At this juncture, the brother of Ibn Zīyād, who was named 'Uthmān, said: 'Umar ibn Sa'ad has spoken the truth. I swear by God that I would have preferred that the lineage of Zīyād remained wretched until the Day of Judgment, but that Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (s) would not have been killed. The narrator, who was himself a witness of this, added: I swear by God that Ibn Zīyād did not refute the words of his brother! (Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut Print, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, (Bee, Taa), vol. 6, p. 268), (Abū Mikhnaf, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 229).

Medina.

Ṭabarī has written about this, saying: "Zaynab ('a) sent someone to Yazīd in order to get permission so that they could grieve over Imam Ḥusayn ('a). Yazīd gave permission and said: 'You must take her to the Dār al-Ḥijārah, so that they can grieve there.' For seven days, they held mourning ceremonies. Every day, a group of women would gather there and their numbers were so large that they could not be counted. The people's emotions soon became uncontrollable and a decision was made to attack Yazīd's house and kill him.

Marwān,[201] who had become aware of this state of affairs, came to Yazīd and said: 'It is not advisable for your rule that the Ahl al-Bayt, their children, and the people who are attached to Ḥusayn remain there. It is advisable that you settle their affairs and send them to Medina. By God, by God! Your rule and kingdom will be destroyed because of these women.'

When Yazīd heard this, he called Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn ('a) and sat him near himself. He then said: 'May God curs the son of Marjānah (Ibn Zīyād). If I had been in charge c this matter, I would have never allowed for things to reac this stage, and I would have given him (Imam Ḥusayn) anything that he asked for and desired. Alas, destiny did not allow it. When you reach Medina, write to me with anything that you need and desire.' Then he arranged gifts to be given to the Imam ('a) and also sent gifts for the women, but it is said that they did not accept them."[202]

Yazīd did not live for more than 4 years after the tragedy of 'Āshūrā, yet he left the disgrace and shame of Karbalā as his legacy and the legacy of the Umayyid dynasty. The situation was such that the Umayyid caliphs who came after him and who possessed even the lowest levels of intelligence were careful not to repeat what Yazīd had done. Ya'qūbī, the famous historian, has written:

---

[201] Marwān was in Medina after the death of Mū'āwīya. Unless it is supposed that he had traveled to Syria during this time period.

[202] Ṭabarī, Kāmil Bahā'ī, Tehran, Maktab Murtaḍāwi, p. 302.

ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Marwān (when he had become the caliph) wrote to Ḥajjāj (the governor of the Ḥijāz) saying: "Do not implicate me with the killing of the children of Abū Ṭālib for I saw that when the children of Ḥarb (Abū Sufyān) got involved with them, they were destroyed."[203]

2- The Revival of the Prophetic Tradition of Martyrdom

When we look at the history of Islam, we find that the Prophet (ṣ) gave much importance to the concept of martyrdom in defending one's life and faith from the oppressive enemies. History shows that this concept of martyrdom was one of the root causes behind the many victories of the early Muslims. Unfortunately, after the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), deviations began to take place, and this warrior spirit was lost amongst the Muslims. Due to the great number of conquests and the accumulation of war booty, the people began to incline towards a lifestyle of ease and comfort.

Things reached a point that when a person achieved a position of power, the people would unquestioningly obey whatever he said out of fear of losing their material wealth and comfort. The tyrants who were ruling in the name of Islam over the people, took advantage of this lack of zeal. This situation became progressively more severe until it reached its peak towards the end of Mūʿāwīya's life and the beginning of Yazīd's rule.

During this time period, the men of religion and the tribal elders were predominately ruled by wealth and power, and they were obedient to its manifestations. They had traded their souls and principles for the wealth and property of this world. These religious and political leaders, even though they were fully aware of the evil characteristics of the family of ʿUbaydullah ibn Zīyād, had submitted themselves to him

---

[203] The History of Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 49. This letter has also been mentioned in previous pages.

completely. They were obedient not only to Yazīd and Ibn Zīyād, but also to those who worked under them because since power, wealth, status, and social influence were in the hands of this group, the religious and social leaders had become obedient and submissive to their every whim.

Another group of people, who were no better than the first group we mentioned, were those who practiced public ascetism and piety only to deceive the masses. They would engage in outward acts of piety in order to gain material benefits from the public. When their level of fame had grown and they had gained the attention and favor of the tyrants who ruled over society, they would then quickly place themselves in their inner circle of confidantes. The people of that time had become accustomed to such characters, and over time, their behavior and actions seemed natural and ordinary for them. Things were beyond the point of causing protest or criticism.

The people's condition had changed to where their only concern and goal was in securing their personal worldly desires. Each individual would work hard towards securin their personal interests, and they would give no thought as t anything but their own personal issues. The society and it immense set of problems was not an issue which the masses really thought about. The only concern of the masses was that their salaries and pensions are not cut off by the government. Out of fear of this, they obeyed and implemented the policies and orders of their leaders without any protest. In addition, when they witnessed any oppression or tyranny, they wouldn't protest against it or criticize it out of fear.

The revolution of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) completely turned this social condition on its head, and it revived the prophetic tradition of martyrdom in the Muslim society. With his uprising, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) showed the people that if they were being oppressed, they could fight against their oppressors— the door to resistance was open. This path did have its difficulties and deprivations, but there was no

humiliation or servitude for the society who chose this option.

Before Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) insurrection, the society had been silent for twenty years and it had submitted itself to the whims of the oppressors for the sake of comfort and wealth. Twenty years is a relatively long period of time, and while there had been many sporadic uprisings, there had not been even the basic elements of a mass movement by the people.

When we examine what happened at Kūfah when Muslim ibn 'Aqīl arrived, we find that this state of abject servitude was deeply rooted in the collective mind of the people. With the false news of the coming of Yazīd's army from Syria, all the people who had gathered around Muslim scattered and completely dispersed. The people were not yet willing to truly stand up against their oppressors.

Yet with the tragedy of Karbalā, the society was awakened, and their social and religious consciousness was brought back to life. An overwhelming majority of the society was deeply affected by what they had witnessed. This awakening and spiritual revival was sufficient to push people towards defending their honor, dignity, and religion.

One of the earliest manifestations of this revival was the rise of 'Abdullah ibn 'Afīf Azdī in the city of Kūfah. When Ibn Zīyād attempted to give his first speech after the war, wishing to announce his victory against Imam Ḥusayn ('a) and speaking words of evil about him, he was confronted with the public protest and anger of 'Abdullah ibn 'Afīf (who had become blind at that point in time).[204] When Ibn Zīyād saw this, he gave the order for his capture and arrest. To prevent this, 'Abdullah's tribe escorted him back to his home, with Ibn Zīyād's guards in pursuit. 'Abdullah resisted their attack, but he was soon captured and executed.[205] This was the first

---

[204] 'Abdullah ibn Afīf was one of the companions of Imam 'Alī (a). He had lost one of his eyes during the Battle of the Camel and he had lost the other during the Battle of Ṣiffīn.

[205] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Tārikh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qamūs

indication that things had reached a boiling point amongst the Muslims. It was in essence the first sign of the coming storm....

3- The Rise of the Muslim Nation

The rise of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) became the source of many other resistance movements that swept the Islamic nation. Let us look at a few of these movements:

A- The Revolt of the Tawwābīn

The first direct response to the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was the 'Movement of the Penitents' in the city of Kūfah. Immediately after Imam Ḥusayn ('a) was martyred and Ibn Zīyād returned to Kūfah, the Shias, who had lost their golden opportunity of aiding the Imam ('a) at Karbalā, became deeply regretful. They realized that they had committed a grave sin, for they had invited Imam Ḥusayn ('a) but when he came to help them, they had left him alone to be killed. This group felt that this sin and deep disgrace would always be upon them unless they rose up and took revenge o the killers of Imam Ḥusayn or at died trying.

The Shias who were thinking along these lines went to fi of their tribal heads for leadership. These five leaders were: Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad Khazā'ī, Musayyib ibn Najaba'h Fazārī, 'Abdullah ibn Sa'ad ibn Nufayl Azdī, 'Abdullah ibn Wāl Tamīmī, and Rifā'ah ibn Shaddād Bajalī; they all gathered together at the house of Sulaymān for a meeting. Musayyib ibn Najabah was the first to begin speaking, and after mentioning some preliminary matters, he said: "We were captivated by our supposed goodness and we would praise our companions and followers for these qualities, but during the

---

al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 263.

- Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 207.
- Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Lūhūf Fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 69.

course of this test which God brought about, our lie was made manifest, and we came out of this test defeated and ashamed. We ended up being negligent in relation to the son of the Prophet.

Ḥusayn (ʿa), the son of the Messenger, wrote letters to us and sent us envoys. He asked us for help many times, both in secret and in the open; he closed the door to any excuse or pretext for us. Yet we refused in giving ourselves over in his service until he was killed in the harshest of ways right next to us. We showed so much irresolution that we neither aided him with our actions or our words, nor did we back him with our wealth and property, nor did we call our tribes to his aid. Now, what are we going to say in front of God and his Messenger (ṣ)? By God, we do not have any excuse in front of our Creator until and unless we punish the killers of Ḥusayn for their actions or die trying. Perhaps then, God will become pleased with us..."

After a few more emotional speeches, Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad Khazāʿī, who had been nominated as the group's leader, said: "We were expectant of the arrival of the family of the Prophet and we encouraged them in coming to the land of Iraq by giving them an oath of support. Yet when our request became reality and the son of the Messenger came to our land, we became irresolute and gave delay, until he was killed...

Behold! Stand upright and take hold of the hilts of your swords! We have provoked the wrath of God, and until we gain back his favor and satisfaction, we should not go in the midst of our wives and children. God will not be pleased with us until we take retribution for the blood of the son of his Prophet.

Do not fear death! I swear by God that whoever fears death is condemned to defeat and abjectness. You must be like the Tribe of Israel when Moses (ʿa) said to them: You, through the worship of the calf, have oppressed yourselves. Therefore, repent to God and kill the guilty ones amongst

yourselves..."[206]

In following up this matter, Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad also wrote about the situation to Sa'ad ibn Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān and the other Shias of Madā'in, asking for their help and support; they likewise accepted Sulaymān's request. Sulaymān then wrote to Muthannā ibn Makhramah' 'Abdī and other Shias of the city of Baṣrah and they also sent back favorable responses to his request.

The Goals of the Tawwābīn

The Tawwābīn firmly believed that the real responsibility for Imam Ḥusayn's ('a) killing was with the ruling Umayyid government and not in the hands of individuals. Therefore, their decision was to march towards Syria for their day of retribution. After they had dealt with the Umayyids, they would return and go after the criminal parties in Kūfah.

As mentioned before, this movement was propelled by a feeling of remorse and penitence, as well as a keenness towards making amends for past mistakes. Between their speeches and letters, one could sense a deep feeling of regret and a burning desire for making amends for the past. Yet it was this ver same goal which made the Tawwābīn's mission seem like suicidal one.

The Tawwābīn's only goal was to get revenge and to make up for their past lapses and sins; they had no other goals besides these. This group was neither after conquest, nor were they after gaining power and wealth; their only goal was retribution. When the Tawwābīn finally left their homes, they left with the full certainty that they would never enter them again. When they were offered amnesty by the enemy, they refused it wholeheartedly for they considered it as the means of the destruction of their movement.

---

[206] "And remember Moses said to his people: 'O my people! Ye have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf: So turn (in repentance) to your Maker, and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers).' Surah Baqarah, Verse 54.

The Tawwābīn's Forces

It was not only the Shias who formed the ranks of the Tawwābīn; people who wanted to see the end of the oppressive Umayyid government also joined their ranks. Given that the Tawwābīn's movement was one which sought full retribution or death, it isn't surprising that not many people joined them. The notebook of Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad contained 15,000 names of people who had joined, and from this number, only 5,000 people assembled when the time came for battle.[207] This was while the army of Syria contained 30,000 soldiers. It is clear that only those who are at a very high stage of faith and who are willing to do great acts of self sacrifice in the way of their beliefs are attracted to a movement which will lead to their ultimate martyrdom. In every age, the number of such people will naturally be small.

The Military Actions of the Tawwābīn

The movement of the Tawwābīn was initiated in the 61st year Hijrī. From this date onwards, the Tawwābīn began to collect military equipment, and to secretly invite people towards taking revenge for the killing of Imam Ḥusayn ('a). People, both Shia and otherwise began to join the movement. As the Tawwābīn were busy preparing for the preliminary stages of their revolution, news came that Yazīd had died. When this news reached them, the Tawwābīn began sending emissaries in order to invite others towards joining and cooperating with them. Additionally, there was no further reason for secrecy and so they began to openly invite people, as well as to build up their stock of weaponry.

The first flames of revolt were lit on a Thursday night on the 5th of Rabī' al-Thānī, in the 65th year Hijrī. On this night, the Tawwābīn gathered and departed for the burial place of

---

[207] From Madā'in 70 individuals went towards joining the Tawwābīn, and from the city of Baṣrah another 300 also attempted to join, but when they arrived close to the battlefield, the Tawwābīn had already been defeated.

Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa). When they reached his grave, they lost all control of their emotions and began to weep and cry out, saying: "Oh God, we did not aid the son of your Prophet. Forgive our past sins, accept our repentance, and send your mercy on the soul of Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his righteous companions. We testify that we are on the same path that Ḥusayn (ʿa) was killed upon. Our Lord, if you don't forgive us our sins and look upon us with mercy and leniency, then we will be wretched and of those who have lost..."

After this emotional scene, they left the grave of the martyrs and began to move towards Syria. In a land called ʿAyn al-Warda, they met the Ummayid army, which was commanded by ʿUbaydullah ibn Zīyād. After three days of hard fighting, they were defeated. All of the commanders of the Tawwābīn, with the exception of Rifāʿah, were martyred. The surviving members, under the leadership of Rifāʿah ibn Shaddād, returned to Kūfah and joined the forces of Mukhtār,[208] who were active there.

Although the revolt of the Tawwābīn was without a larger political goal and was also defeated fairly quickly, it still had a very deep effect on the people of Kūfah. It also prepared the people and set the stage for a larger and more protracted struggle against the Umayyid government.

B- The Revolt of Mukhtār

In the 66th year Hijrī, Mukhtār ibn Abī ʿUbayd Thaqafī revolted in the land of Iraq in order to take revenge from the killers of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa).

During the time that Muslim ibn ʿAqīl had entered Kūfah, Mukhtār had come forward and joined forces with him. When the people lost heart and Muslim ended up being killed, Mukhtār was captured and jailed by ʿUbaydullah ibn Zīyād. After the tragedy of ʿĀshūrā, he was released from prison

---

[208] Abū Mikhnaf, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd ibn Mikhnaf Azdī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Qum, p. 248-310.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 158-186.

through the mediation of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, who visited Yazīd to secure his release. At the same time that he was released, 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr also revolted in Mecca and declared himself as the caliph of the Muslims. Mukhtār departed for Mecca and began participating in 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr's revolt.

During the year 64 Hijrī, five months after the death of Yazīd, Mukhtār realized that the people of Iraq were not supportive of 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr's government. In addition, he saw their anti Umayyid sentiments and their preparation for revolt against the government. Therefore, he left Mecca and began his own movement from Kūfah.[209]

The Reason behind Abdullah ibn Zubayr's Unrealized Goals

In order for us to understand why the people of Iraq initially followed Ibn Zubayr, and then later accepted Mukhtār's invitation, we must pay attention to the fact that the people of Iraq were after two main things during that time period:

1- Social reform and support of the Mawālī (non Arab Muslims who were subject to oppression during the rule of the Umayyids).

2- Revenge against the Umayyids for the blood of the Hashimites.

It was in the hopes of obtaining these two goals that the people of Iraq gave their oath of allegiance to Ibn Zubayr. The reason behind this was that Ibn Zubayr was the enemy of the Umayyids and he also showed himself as being a pious man

---

[209] Abū al-'Abbās al-Mabrad, al-Kāmil Fī Lughah wa al-'Adab, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 112-116.

- Akhtab al-Khawarizmī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, Researched and compiled by Shaykh Muḥammad Samāwī, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Mufīd, vol. 2, p. 202 and onwards. During this time period, the Tawwābīn in Kūfah were busy preparing themselves and gathering more members. Yet Mukhtār was quoted as saying: Sulaymān does not have the necessary awareness and preparation in military matters and he will be quickly defeated.

who was unattached to worldly matters. Yet time showed the people that there was not much difference between the government of Ibn Zubayr and the government of the Umayyids. It is true that Ibn Zubayr freed Iraq from the influence and control of the Umayyids, but the killers of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) were yet unpunished. In fact, criminals such as Shimr ibn Dhī al-Jawshan, ʿAmr ibn Ḥajjāj, Shabath ibn Ribʿay, who had all played major roles in the killings, were not only still free, but they were considered as being very close to the ruling government!

From the perspective of enacting justice, Ibn Zubayr did not meet the Iraqi's expectations and wishes. The Mawālī (non-Arab Muslims) were still living a life of deprivation, and power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of the tribal leaders. This caused the people to abandon Ibn Zubayr, and to support Mukhtār's movement instead.

Muḥammad ibn Hannafiyah, the son of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), also supported Mukhtar; this caused the people to have further trust in his movement. Mukhtār made the slogan of his movement "Seeking revenge for the blood of Ḥusayn (ʿa)". This made the Iraqis hopeful that they would finally rea their long standing goals.

After reaching power, Mukhtār supported the Mawāl and took steps towards securing their social rights. This actio of Mukhtār instigated the tribal heads and leaders against him, and they formed a group to counter him. With the help of ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr's forces, they began to prepare for war against Mukhtār. At the head of this group stood the killers of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), and this matter was enough to cause the revolutionaries to stand firm in their positions.

Mukhtār began to pursue the killers of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) mercilessly, and they were killed wherever they were found. This campaign was so relentless that in one day alone, 280 of them were captured and killed, and the houses of some of the leaders who had escaped were demolished. One such example was the house of Muḥammad ibn Ashʿath which was razed to

the ground. Mukhtār ordered that they take the material from Muḥammad ibn Ash'ath's house and rebuild the house of Ḥujr ibn 'Adī. Ḥujr ibn 'Adī had been a devoted follower of Imam 'Alī ('a) who was martyred by Zīyād ibn Abī, and whose house had been demolished on his orders many years before.[210]

4- The Overthrow of the Umayyids

The revolts of both Mukhtār and the Tawwābīn took place shortly after the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn ('a). In later years, many other revolts took place which were also inspired by Imam Ḥusayn ('a). The largest of these was that of the 'Abbāsids, which took place in the 132nd year Hijrī, and was victorious over the Umayyid government. The most powerful factor in the 'Abbāsid's victory was the oppression which the Umayyids had committed against the Banī Hāshim. Among these oppressive acts, the one act which raised the wrath of the people the most was the killing of Imam Ḥusayn ('a).

The historians have written that: "At the time when the head of Marwān (the last Umayyid caliph) was brought to Abū al-'Abbās (the first 'Abbāsid caliph), Abū al-'Abbās made a lengthy prostration, and when he lifted his head, he said the following to the head of Marwān: 'I praise God who took my revenge from you and your tribe. I praise God who made me victorious and triumphant over you.' Then he added: 'Now, it is not important when my death comes, for I have killed 2,000 people from the Umayyids for the revenge of the blood of Imam Ḥusayn ('a)...'"[211]

Abū al-'Abbās then ordered that the bodies of the Ummayids be taken out into the streets. He said to his soldiers: "Take them, and drag them through the streets. Leave

---

[210] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kâmil fī al-Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 211-244.

[211] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 7, p. 130. Mas'ūdi has narrated this matter in Marwaj al-Dhahab (Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs) vol. 3, p. 257

them there so that the people can curse them after their deaths just as they cursed them when they were alive." Not much time had passed when the people saw that dogs had taken the corpses by their legs and were dragging them on the ground, while they were still dressed in their fine and expensive embroidered clothing.[212]

[212] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 7, p. 139.